



2025 *Comprehensive Plan*



Wilson County North Carolina

May 2008

Balancing Growth & the Preservation of Rural Character



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**2025
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
WILSON COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA**

**“BALANCING GROWTH & THE PRESERVATION OF
RURAL CHARACTER”**

**Prepared for
Wilson County Board of Commissioners**

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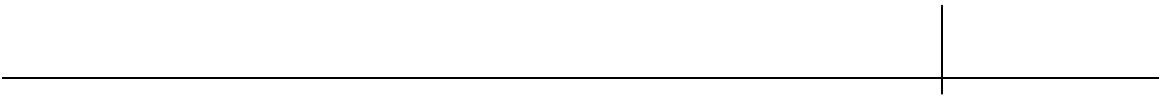
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Citizens of Wilson County

Thanks to all who participated!

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2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
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WILSON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

CHAPTER 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Comprehensive Plan for Wilson County articulates a vision of balancing growth and the preservation of rural character. The vision of this plan is a result of a year-long effort led by the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee -- reflecting the broad vision and goals of the County's residents, property owners, appointed boards, organizations and elected officials that participated during the process. The Plan is intended to be a mechanism from which decisions can be made that will help shape the future of Wilson County 20 years into the future. Below, please find a brief summary of the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan Purpose and Use

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to establish a set of guidelines and procedures for implementing the long-range development and conservation objectives of Wilson County. Specifically, the Plan is intended for use by government agencies, residents, private developers, property owners and private organizations concerned with planning the County's future growth, development and preservation.

Plan Vision and Goals

The Wilson County Comprehensive Plan aims to create a clear vision for the future that captures a basic Town and Country Planning Concept of allowing for future urban growth and rural preservation. Through the creation of this Plan, Wilson County is proactively responding to the need to accommodate growth by developing the plans and guidelines critical to taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by growth, while preserving its unique quality of life reflected in the rural landscape of Wilson County. It is in the realization of this balance, between managing anticipated growth and sustaining and improving upon existing conditions, that the citizens of Wilson County see their "unique quality of life," which creates the challenge in the implementation of the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan over the next 20 years.

Plan Goals

Seven goals have been developed to achieve the vision for balancing growth and preservation of rural character in Wilson County and provide basic guidance for future growth throughout the County. The goal areas include, intergovernmental cooperation, population and housing, economic development, community facilities, natural resources, cultural and historic resources, and land use and growth management. Each goal area is represented as a separate section in this plan with strategies and actions for implementation.

- ***Intergovernmental Cooperation***
 - Facilitate an on-going relationship between Wilson County, its nine municipalities and other governmental, non-profit and quasi-governmental organizations.

- **Population and Housing**
 - Promote residential development that maintains the rural nature of the area that is safe and attractive – meeting the needs of the population.

- **Economic Development**
 - Encourage compatible development between industrial and commercial growth by focusing on selected locations with high development potential that minimize impact on surrounding population, and

 - Encourage the development of agri-tourism opportunities and green economic development

- **Community Facilities**
 - Provide access to and encourage the development and provision of adequate community facilities for all Wilson County residents.

- **Natural Resources**
 - Preserve the natural resources, water, air and land that have made Wilson County a wonderful place to live.

- **Cultural and Historic Resources**
 - Preserve and protect historical and cultural resources for the benefit of both current and future residents.

- **Land Use and Growth Management**
 - Establish a future land use / growth management map designating *Rural Growth Areas*, *Secondary Growth Areas (10-20 years)*, *Primary Growth Areas (5–10 years)*, and *Conservation Areas* that support a basic Town and Country planning model of allowing for both urban growth and rural preservation over the next 20 years, and

 - Establish general guidelines for residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, institutional/governmental and agricultural uses that allow for compatibility between uses.

Comprehensive Plan Process

Over the course of a year, the final draft of the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan was derived utilizing input from the general public, municipalities, county and city planning staffs, elected officials, and the County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, which helped complete the vision, goals, and recommendations of the Plan. Background research was completed, public meetings were held, public surveys were reviewed and many meetings were held to develop the goals, strategies and future land use/growth vision map.

Anticipated Growth in Wilson

Since the 1990 population count by the US Census Bureau Wilson County has seen a 16.3 percent increase. While the growth experienced by Wilson County is not the highest in the region, growth pressures have been continuous and are expected to continue.

County Population Growth Comparison (1990 – 2005)

COUNTY	1990	2000	2005	ACTUAL GROWTH	% GROWTH
EDGECOMBE	56,692	55,606	53,034	-3,658	-6.5
GREENE	15,384	18,974	20,173	4,789	31.1
JOHNSTON	81,306	121,900	146,312	65,006	80
NASH	76,677	87,385	91,544	14,867	19.4
PITT	108,480	133,719	143,207	34,727	32
WAYNE	104,666	113,329	115,714	11,048	10.6
WILSON	66,061	73,811	76,826	10,765	16.3

Source: State of NC Demographer's Office

Population projections compiled by the State of North Carolina's Demographer's Office shows the growth in Wilson County will slow from the pace of growth it has experienced in the previous 15 years. Between 2010 and 2025 Wilson County is projected to grow 11.1 percent, over five percent less than the growth seen in the 15 year period between 1990 and 2005. However, land prices and the demand to be in close proximity to regional centers, such as the Research Triangle, will keep Wilson's population increasing at a steady pace. The projected growth may occur at a manageable pace for Wilson County to appropriately plan ahead. Although the recent building permits and increased development interest by people from outside the county, seem to be indicating the state projections may actually turn out to be much lower than the growth potential.

County Population Projections

COUNTY	2010	2015	2020	2025	% GROWTH
EDGECOMBE	51,329	49,579	47,937	46,054	-10.2
GREENE	21,567	22,976	24,485	25,883	20
JOHNSTON	169,143	193,694	218,868	245,702	45.3
NASH	96,007	100,271	104,736	108,822	13.3
PITT	153,411	163,258	173,193	182,890	19.2
WAYNE	119,222	122,290	125,701	128,444	7.7
WILSON	80,080	82,934	86,222	89,006	11.1

Source: State of NC Demographer's Office

An assumption of this comprehensive plan is that growth will continue and a need will exist to allow and manage growth in a way that preserves the rural character as suggested in the plan vision and goals.

Next Steps / Implementation

The success of any plan is how well it is implemented. It will be necessary to closely follow future development trends and patterns to address any significant changes that may not be addressed in this plan.

As next steps, a five-year work plan is suggested. This work plan will help the implementation of the plan “take off” and as suggested below, revisions will be necessary in the future to keep the plan “alive” and relevant. A work plan greater than five years is not suggested, because a thorough review and update is suggested at that mile stone.

Five-Year Work Plan

A five (5) year Work Plan was created to assign priorities to goals and strategies which were developed to achieve the vision of the plan.

Year(s)	Fiscal Year(s)	Priority Actions
1	2008-2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and adopt a unified development ordinance that incorporates the goals and strategies of this plan • Continue to participate in the Vision 20/20 effort and the City of Wilson Comprehensive Plan Update • Consider identifying existing committees or developing committees within the county to oversee and monitor the progress of the plan goal areas • As part of the unified development ordinance process, conduct a more detailed review of the northwestern side of the county where growth pressures are significantly greater than other areas of the county • Establish a plan for agri-tourism and agri-business development
2 and 3	2009-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner closely with the County’s municipalities in the pursuit of a joint hazard mitigation planning effort • Pursue a joint recreational plan and study with the County’s municipalities to include a regional greenway component and tourism related activities such as camping, canoeing, etc. • Consider detailed small area plans for all Planning Areas of the County identified in the Comprehensive Plan • Consider developing a capital improvement plan to guide county capital investments
4	2011-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish the County Historic Preservation Commission and Local Preservation Program
5	2012-2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the Comprehensive Plan

CHAPTER 2 INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2006 the Wilson County Board of Commissioners approved the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan for the County. This Comprehensive Plan will replace the 1990 Plan prepared through a joint effort between the City of Wilson and Wilson County. Changes in the County’s growth and development patterns and a desire for a County specific plan necessitated this update. Feedback on this plan was sought and received from the City of Wilson Planning and Inspections Department and Vision 20/20 Committee.

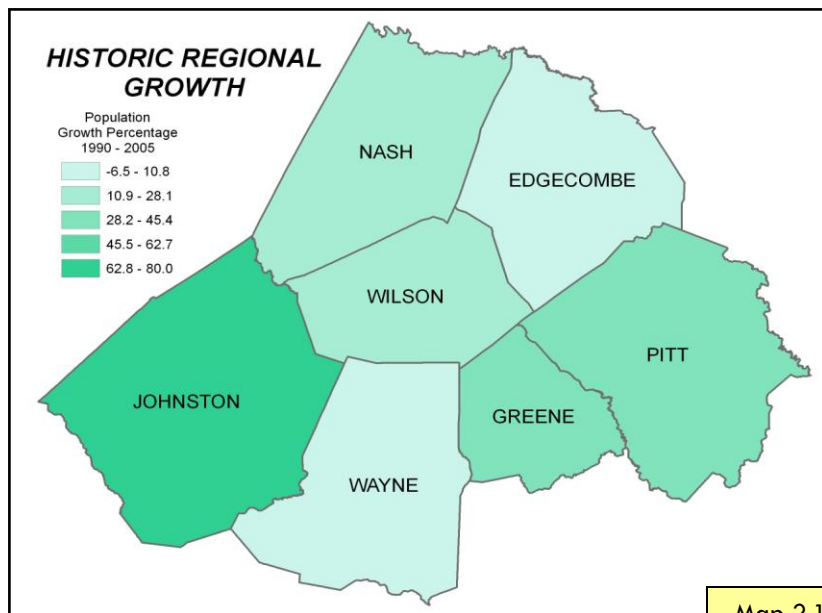
The preparation of a new Comprehensive Plan for Wilson County comes at a time of increased population growth for many of the counties in the Coastal Plain region. As demonstrated in Table 2.1 below, the population of Wilson County has increased by 16 percent in the period between 1990 and 2006. Additionally, Map 2.1 shows the regional growth patterns, by county. While population growth is an indication of a healthy economy and an area that is attractive to residents, it does not come without challenges. Increased population leads to immense demands on public services and community facilities. The Wilson County Comprehensive Plan analyzes county-wide growth and sets goals and strategies to continue the effective and efficient provision of services to residents in the future.

Table 2.1
Regional County Growth

County	1990	2000	2006
Edgecombe	56,558	55,606	53,964
Greene	15,384	18,974	20,157
Johnston	81,306	121,965	152,143
Nash	76,677	87,420	92,312
Pitt	107,924	133,798	145,619
Wayne	104,666	113,329	113,847
Wilson	66,061	73,814	76,624

Source: U.S. Census

Between 1990 and 2000 Wilson County grew at a moderate pace in comparison to the surrounding areas. Wilson’s proximity to Raleigh and Greenville is a major contributor to its growth. As those areas continue to grow, higher growth rates may result in changes in the way some jurisdictions provide efficient services to its residents.



Map 2.1

This Comprehensive Plan will help Wilson County, through careful planning, to provide essential services for the residents well into the future.

A. GENERAL PURPOSE

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to establish a set of guidelines and procedures for implementing the long-range development and conservation objectives of Wilson County. Specifically, the Plan is intended for use by government agencies, residents, private developers, property owners and private organizations concerned with planning the County's future growth and development.

The Wilson County Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document, but rather a guide to assist community leaders in making decisions regarding the future development of Wilson County. It is an important tool, intended to guide the future of the County into the most desirable outcome. Policies for directing land development are generally defined by the Plan, which describes the framework for the arrangement of land use, traffic circulation, and public services that will encourage and contribute to the economic, social, and physical welfare of the County. While the Wilson Comprehensive Plan is a collective vision of what the County can be, it is also a long range statement of public policy. The Plan is a guide to address opportunities and concerns stated by the residents of the County, as well as a tool to enhance quality of life. The Plan's recommendations were created after soliciting input from the citizens of the County and will help future decision makers create a livable County where people work, live, and recreate.

Once adopted, the Comprehensive Plan becomes Wilson County's official public policy to guide decisions related to growth, quality of life and capital investments. Future decisions will be weighed against this Plan. The Wilson County Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic tool that will continue to evolve and develop as new influences, opportunities and constraints occur within the County. As leadership within Wilson County changes over time, future leaders will not only have the research, analysis and synthesis necessary to implement the Comprehensive Plan goals and strategies, but also be able to amend the Plan for yet unknown future contingencies.

To indeed be comprehensive, the general objectives of the Comprehensive Plan are:

1. An expression of the development goals, principles, policies, and criteria for Wilson County's physical growth;
2. A tool for decision-making that will allow proposals for land use to be evaluated on a daily basis in the context of the County's development goals;
3. A clearly stated strategy for development that will serve as a framework for characterizing and prioritizing key projects for implementation by both the public and private sector;
4. A flexible tool kit that will adjust to evolving conditions over time;
5. Easy to use by the general public, community leaders and the development community; and

6. The framework for zoning ordinances, development regulations and regulatory instruments which should be designated as implementation tools to achieve the goals of the Plan.

B. 20 YEAR VISION

The Wilson County Comprehensive Plan aims to create a clear vision for the future. Through the creation of this Plan, Wilson County is proactively responding to a need to accommodate growth. As part of that preparedness for the future, the County has undertaken a comprehensive planning process to develop the plans and guidelines critical to taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by growth, while preserving its unique quality of life. It is in the realization of this balance, between managing anticipated growth and sustaining and improving upon existing conditions, that the citizens of Wilson County see their “unique quality of life”, which creates the challenge in the implementation of the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan over the next 20 years.

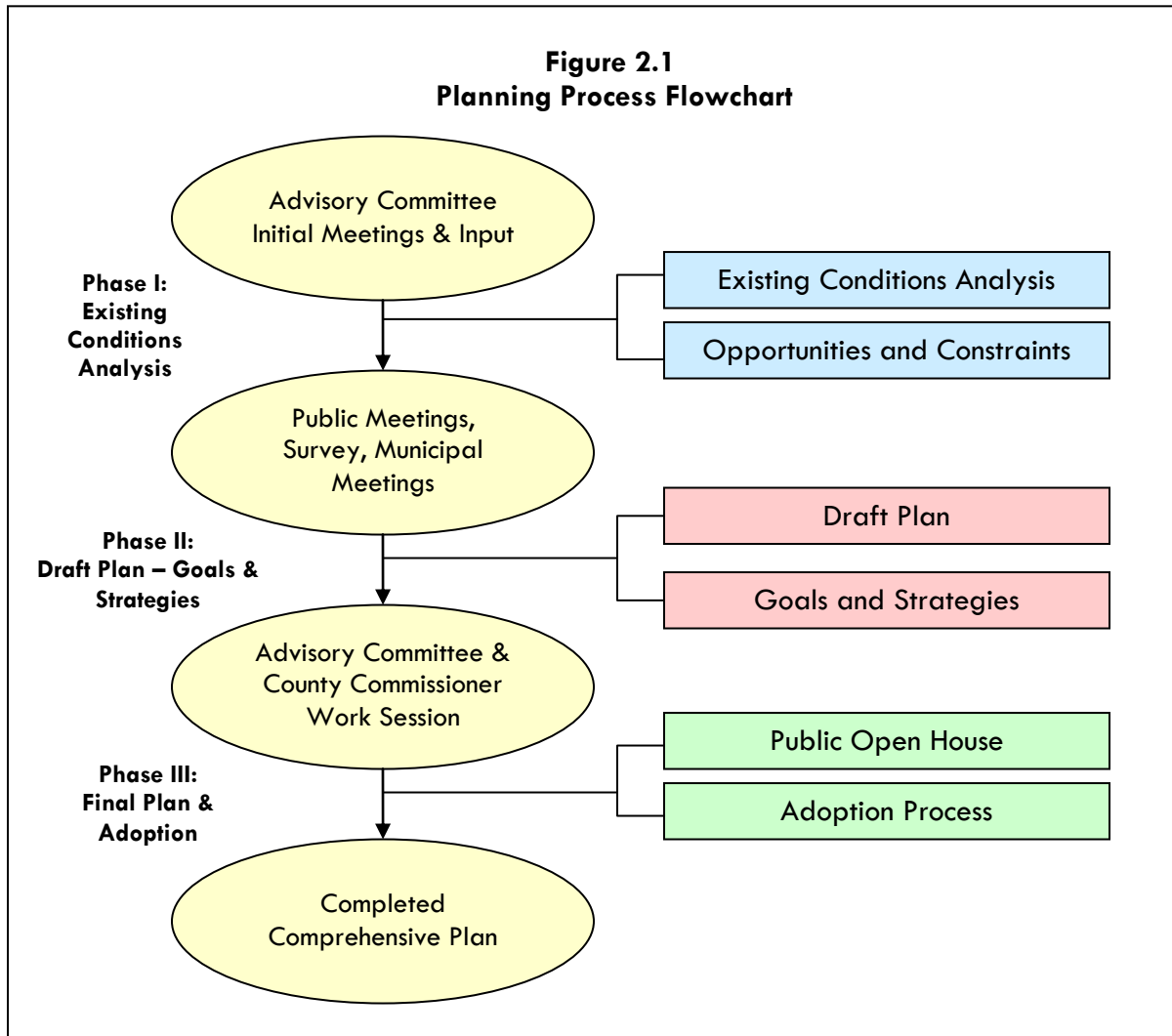
Wilson County prides itself in the rural character that has been maintained over the years. The surrounding local agriculture is not only one of the strongest economic industries in the County, but is also a draw for residents into the area. As such, this Plan follows a general Town and Country Planning Concept, which proposes a balance of future land development and open space preservation that is both pro-growth and pro-preservation. Through this approach, it is estimated that both future growth and future preservation can be facilitated, while a variety of lifestyle options can be realized in more urban growth areas and rural growth areas.

The Wilson County Comprehensive Plan meets the following objectives through a public driven, comprehensive planning process that:

1. Shows the implications between land use and infrastructure decision-making in Wilson County.
2. Provides multiple facets for public participation by the citizens and property owners of Wilson County.
3. Encourages a high level of cooperation between Wilson County and all municipalities building cooperation over a long-term, continuous basis.
4. Utilizes a basic Town and Country Planning Concept to establish long-range land use/growth management and conservation/preservation goals for the County.

II. PLANNING PROCESS

Over the course of a year, the final draft of the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan was derived utilizing public input from the general public, municipalities, county and city planning staffs, elected officials, and the County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, which helped complete the vision, goals, and recommendations of the Plan. Figure 2.1 illustrates the planning process used in the preparation of the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan.



The first step of the planning process was the completion of an inventory of existing conditions. This inventory included population and housing trends, economic development, infrastructure and utilities, transportation, historic and cultural resources, parks and recreation, environmental and natural resources, intergovernmental cooperation, and existing land uses. This information was gathered from a variety of sources including, but not limited to, preexisting plans, County resources, the United States Census Bureau, and stakeholder interviews. Chapters 5-10 outline the analysis of existing conditions, including goals and strategies for each. The analysis of existing conditions also included the information provided by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, a committee of citizens of Wilson County, representing various interests, and information from public input sessions and the public input survey.

The second step in the planning process was to utilize the information gathered in the inventory of existing conditions to develop the land use / growth management strategies for addressing the opportunities, issues, and challenges identified during the process. Additionally, the step included the creation of a future land use / growth management map. During this step of the process the Advisory Committee hosted a meeting for all of the municipalities to weigh in on the proposed future land use map to make it as

comprehensive in scope as possible. In this Plan, Chapter 11 deals with land use and growth management and Chapter 12 outlines the next steps for implementation.

The final step for the Wilson County Comprehensive plan is formal adoption by both the County Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. The adoption process will include an open house and provide opportunities for public review and comment prior to the plan adoption.

A. HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This Plan was designed to be user-friendly for elected officials, staff, residents and property owners in Wilson County. The Wilson County Comprehensive Plan has two primary sections: existing conditions, and the draft plan – goals and strategies. The Plan provides current and future leaders access to this information to aid in decision making for future growth and development.

While the Plan is not a regulatory document, there are many ways in which the vision of the Plan can be achieved. This Plan provides the following opportunities for use:

1. For each recommendation/goal that is identified a course of action or strategy is provided.
2. Capital Improvement expenditures can and should be based on the goals and strategies of the Plan.
3. Update development ordinances to comply with the visions, goals, and strategies made in the Plan.
4. Use the future land use guidelines and future land use / growth management map in the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan for guidance in County actions and development approvals.
5. Review and revise the Comprehensive Plan every five to ten years to maintain consistency with current growth activity.
6. Amend the Plan if new information becomes available in order to keep the plan current and relevant.

B. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Wilson County Comprehensive Planning Process was developed to ensure public participation would not only be adequate to meet approval requirements, but would actually drive the process. The Wilson County Comprehensive Plan planning process included the establishment of a 10-member Advisory Committee, appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, to guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The Advisory Committee met throughout the planning process, and was comprised of elected officials, agency representatives, and local citizens.

In addition to the Advisory Committee, four rounds of public input sessions were held to solicit information. The first meeting was a public education session to introduce the comprehensive planning process to the general public, and to answer early stage

questions. The next two meetings, which were held in separate locations, were held in a small group facilitation format, with members of the Planning Team and the Advisory Committee acting as facilitators for the citizens that attended the meetings. A separate work session, which was open to the public, was hosted by the Advisory Committee for municipal representatives to provide comment on future land use alternatives. A final public meeting was structured as an open house to present the plan to the general public and to provide a final opportunity for input. The plan was also reviewed by the City of Wilson Planning Department and the Vision 20/20 committee.

In addition, a public input survey was utilized to solicit information. The survey was available to citizens who were unable to attend the public meetings or who had additional comments after the meetings have taken place, but before the final public open house. The survey was posted on the internet, while hard copies were available at County offices. Details regarding the results of the public input sessions and survey are further discussed in Chapter 3-Background.

During the adoption process, public comments and concerns will also be received at the Planning Board meeting, as well as at the public meeting by the County Board of Commissioners.

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
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WILSON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

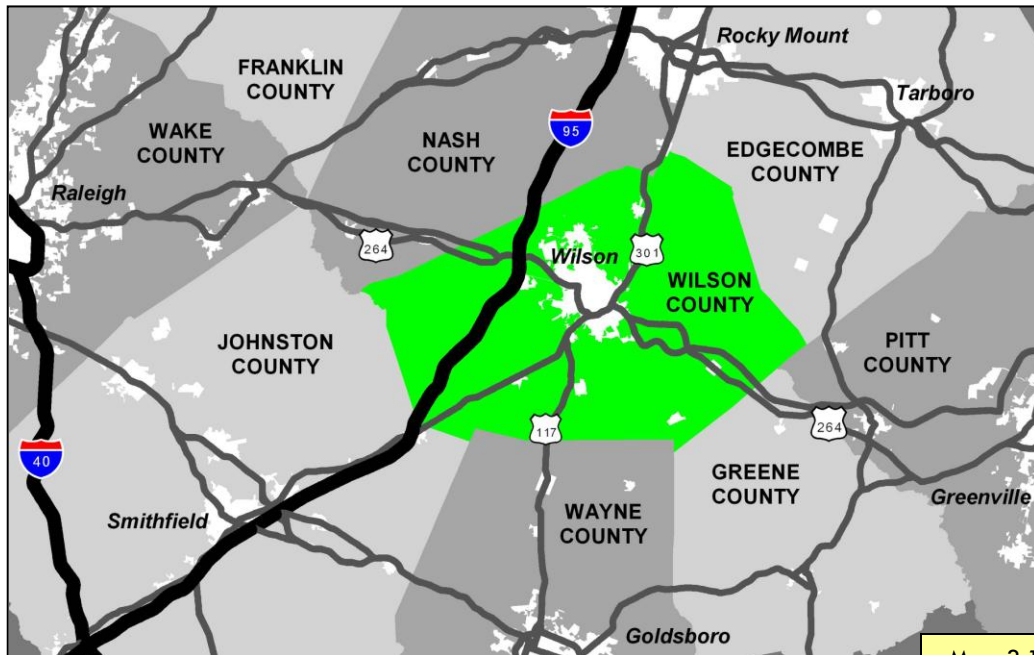
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BACKGROUND

I. WILSON COUNTY PROFILE

Wilson County is located predominantly in the Coastal Plain physiographic province of North Carolina, and is located along Interstate 95 halfway between New York and Florida. The City of Raleigh, the State Capital, is located 45 miles to the west of Wilson County, and the Atlantic Ocean is 100 miles to the east. Wilson County's central location between Raleigh, Rocky Mount and Greenville increases its attractiveness as a place to live, work, and recreate.



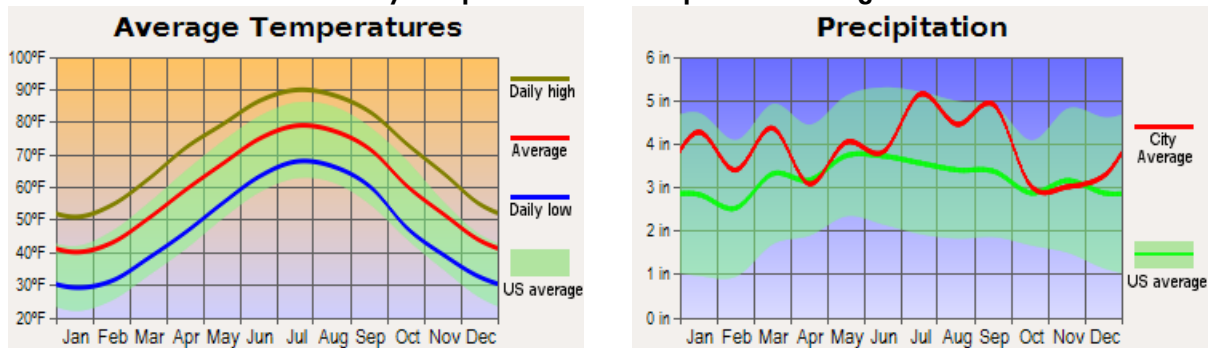
Map 3.1

The 2006 estimated population of Wilson County was 76,624. Wilson County has seven municipalities located entirely within its boundaries, with an additional two municipalities that are partially located there. The City of Wilson, the county seat, is located in the center of Wilson County, and with a population of 47,380 in 2006 makes up over 60 percent of the total County population.

The figures below demonstrate the average temperatures and precipitation, by month, for Wilson County, North Carolina.

Figure 3.1

County Temperature and Precipitation Averages



II. BRIEF HISTORY

American Indians inhabited the area that became Wilson County for centuries before non-natives moved into the Carolinas. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Tuscarora Indians lived in the area of eastern North Carolina that would become Wilson and its surrounding counties.

The earliest European settlers in this area arrived about 1740. Most came from Virginia or the Carolina Coast rather than directly from England. At the time of the American Revolution the area was only lightly settled. British troops under General Charles Cornwallis traveled through what would become Wilson County on their trek north from Wilmington to Yorktown during the war.

Wilson County, as established in 1855, measured about thirty miles east to west and twenty miles north to south and contained 373 square miles. It straddled the vague boundary between coastal plain and piedmont. The land was almost level, with slight rolling hills especially to the west and northwest. Streams were narrow and surrounded by swampy land. The highest elevation was only 305 feet above sea level, in the northwestern corner of the county, and the lowest point fifty feet above sea level in the extreme southeast of the county. The City of Wilson, both the center of the county and its capital, was about 138 feet above sea level. Tar and turpentine were the principal cash products at the time, with cotton becoming important in the 1860s and tobacco in the 1890s.

The railroad was integral to the development of Wilson in the nineteenth century. By late 1839 the Wilmington and Raleigh Railroad completed the tracks through what would become Wilson County, with stops at Bardin's Depot (Black Creek), Toisnot (Wilson), and Joyner's Depot (Elm City). In 1848 a bill was introduced in the legislature to incorporate Toisnot Depot and Hickory Grove, then in Edgecombe County, into the town of Wilson. The town, officially established on January 29, 1849, was named after Louis Dicken Wilson (1789-1847). General Wilson, son of an Edgecombe planter, had been a state Representative for five terms and state Senator for fourteen terms (1820, 1824 to 1832, and 1838 to 1846). He organized a company of local volunteers for the Mexican War but died during the war from a fever.

Joshua Barnes and his fellow legislators David Williams and George Howard helped incorporate Wilson County in 1855 from four other counties, Edgecombe, Nash, Wayne, and Johnston. The legislature formally proclaimed Wilson County on February 14, 1855.

Stantonsburg became the area's first incorporated town in 1817. Other Wilson County towns included Wilson, incorporated in 1849, Black Creek, incorporated in 1870, Elm City, chartered in 1873 (originally as Toisnot, but was changed in 1913), Saratoga, chartered in 1873 and again in 1899, Lucama, incorporated in 1889, and Sims, chartered in 1913 and incorporated in 1923.

In 1890 Wilson opened its first tobacco warehouse and by 1920 Wilson was the World's Greatest Tobacco Market. Hackney Brothers established a thriving carriage manufacturing business by the turn of the century. Barton College, formerly called Atlantic Christian College, opened in 1902 and presently serves an international student body. After World War II, Wilson County diversified its economy and is now home to large tire

and pharmaceutical manufacturers, an array of smaller manufacturers, financial institutions, such as BB&T operations, antique stores, and other commercial and tourist activities as well as tobacco marketing firms.

III. PREVIOUS PLANNING INITIATIVES

The Wilson County Comprehensive Plan is not the only planning initiative that has occurred in the County. A review of other planning initiatives has been included below, and relevant information from these plans has been reviewed and incorporated into the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan.

A. Wilson Growth Plan

In 1990, Wilson County and the City of Wilson adopted a joint growth management plan entitled *Wilson Growth Plan: Policies for Growth and Development*. This Plan included discussion points, goals, and recommendations for thirteen policy categories, including: economic development, transportation, water and sewer service, industrial development, commercial and office development, housing and residential development, agricultural and rural development, parks, recreation and open space, community appearance, environmental quality, education, downtown central city, and planning coordination.

The policies developed in the *Wilson Growth Plan* were followed by implementation strategies to achieve them. Other areas of study in the *Wilson Growth Plan* were growth management and system evaluation, which reviewed options for creating a joint planning entity governing both the City of Wilson and Wilson County; external and internal growth factors, which did a detailed review and analysis of trends in the area; and an economic development strategy (market analysis). It is unclear what percentage of the goals and policies were achieved by either the City or the County in the time that this Plan was effective.

Since the adoption of the 1990 Plan, the City of Wilson has reviewed and updated the policies and recommendations for areas within the City. In 1998, the City of Wilson adopted the updated *Wilson Growth Plan*, which was geared more specifically towards the growth occurring within its jurisdiction. Wilson County has not adopted any new growth policies since the adoption of the 1990 Plan.

B. Wilson 20/20 Community Vision

The Wilson 20/20 Community Vision was a broad-based effort including both the City of Wilson and Wilson County—entitled the ‘Greater Wilson Community’—businesses, schools, colleges, social initiatives and churches. The goal of the efforts was to create a shared vision for the Wilson Community. In the fall of 2006, efforts began to form the Wilson 20/20 Vision strategic planning steering committee. The early efforts included groundwork, interviews with the steering committee members and the completion of a community profile.

The 50 member steering committee was active in planning and carrying out over 35 community forums. The community forums were held to gain early support by the citizens and to encourage expression of views about the current and future state of the greater Wilson community. Other methods of public participation included an online community survey with over 900 responses. The information gathered at the forums

and from the survey was used to draft a community-wide vision statement for the Plan. The vision statement has been finalized and can be viewed below.

Wilson 20/20

“The Greater Wilson Community is dynamic and vibrant, with a diversified, entrepreneurial economy and inclusive, compassionate culture, enriching all with an unparalleled quality of life.”

We are a regional employment center. Our strategic location, transportation and information technology infrastructure, abundant water and land resources, and highly trained workforce sustain a diverse commercial and industrial base. We nurture new and existing business growth.

We carefully manage commercial, industrial, and residential growth in ways that preserve open space and our history and encourage investments across all parts of the community. Our vital, historic downtowns are hubs of cultural and commercial activity. Sidewalks, bikeways, and greenways connect our beautiful neighborhoods.

We are a community of educational excellence, with a culture that embraces life-long learning, providing opportunities for all. Our families, early childhood programs, K-12 schools, Barton College, Wilson Technical Community College, business, faith-based, and other community organizations, work together to prepare students for a rapidly changing world.

We enjoy a rich variety of social, educational, cultural, and recreational activities for persons of every age and income. Our superb athletic facilities, parks, arts, cultural attractions, and other amenities make our community highly desirable for young adults, families, and retirees to call home and for tourists to visit.

We are a healthy community with a holistic view of wellness for all our citizens at all stages of life and socioeconomic status. Healthy lifestyles are supported by excellent health care professionals and facilities; comprehensive, caring, community-based wellness programs; and a clean environment.

We are “one” community that respects and celebrates our diversity with active efforts to assure justice, harmony, and understanding. We take pride in our beautiful, safe neighborhoods where civic engagement is strong and local leadership is developed.

We are a community that works together to support this shared vision. Our local governments and other community institutions cooperate extensively to create a friendly climate for home grown businesses, community betterment efforts, and excellent quality of life. We create and achieve our vision because we are a collaborative community.

The final phase of development for the Wilson 20/20 Vision was a community-wide, day long summit held in April of 2007. The summit was used as a platform to take the vision statement and move towards goals and implementation. Nearly 200 people attended the summit. The final outcome of the summit was the development of seven

action teams that met over the next five months developing strategy plans which were developed into a comprehensive report in September of 2007. The action teams were broken down into the following categories: economy, managed growth, education, quality of life, health and wellness, community, and collaboration.

An ideal planning process for any area involves a number of steps including the preparation of a strategic plan, the preparation of a comprehensive land use plan, followed by the preparation of regulations. The Wilson 20/20 Vision serves as the strategic plan for the area, and actually recommends the preparation of comprehensive plans for both Wilson County and the City of Wilson. Throughout the development of this Plan we will be referencing the work that the Wilson 20/20 Vision has done, pulling from the vision statement and applicable goals, and reviewing the extensive public input that was compiled. These Plans should not be seen as competing policies, but rather Plans seeking the same end – the efficient and effective growth of the greater Wilson community.

IV. RECENT TRENDS IN WILSON COUNTY

Examining population trends and the construction of new housing is critical to determining what future trends Wilson County may anticipate. Population and building permit data for all areas of Wilson County have been analyzed to identify development trends. Building permit data goes back to 2001 and runs through 2007.

Since the 1990 population count by the US Census Bureau Wilson County has seen a 16.3 percent increase. While the growth experienced by Wilson County is not the highest in the region, growth pressures have been continuous and are expected to continue. Factors that have influenced growth in Wilson County are discussed in detail in Section V below.

Table 3.1
County Population Growth Comparison (1990 – 2005)

COUNTY	1990	2000	2005	ACTUAL GROWTH	% GROWTH
EDGECOMBE	56,692	55,606	53,034	-3,658	-6.5
GREENE	15,384	18,974	20,173	4,789	31.1
JOHNSTON	81,306	121,900	146,312	65,006	80
NASH	76,677	87,385	91,544	14,867	19.4
PITT	108,480	133,719	143,207	34,727	32
WAYNE	104,666	113,329	115,714	11,048	10.6
WILSON	66,061	73,811	76,826	10,765	16.3

Source: State of North Carolina Demographer's Office

Population projections compiled by the State of North Carolina Demographer's Office shows the growth in Wilson County will slow from the pace of growth it has experienced in the previous 15 years. Between 2010 and 2025 Wilson County is projected to grow 11.1 percent, over five percent less than the growth seen in the 15 year period between 1990 and 2005. However, land prices and the demand to be in close proximity to regional centers, such as the Research Triangle, will keep Wilson's population increasing at a steady pace. The projected growth may occur at a manageable pace for Wilson County to appropriately plan ahead. Although the recent building permits and increased

development interest by people from outside the county, seem to be indicating the state projections may actually turn out to be much lower than the growth potential.

Table 3.2
County Population Projections

COUNTY	2010	2015	2020	2025	% GROWTH
EDGECOMBE	51,329	49,579	47,937	46,054	-10.2
GREENE	21,567	22,976	24,485	25,883	20
JOHNSTON	169,143	193,694	218,868	245,702	45.3
NASH	96,007	100,271	104,736	108,822	13.3
PITT	153,411	163,258	173,193	182,890	19.2
WAYNE	119,222	122,290	125,701	128,444	7.7
WILSON	80,080	82,934	86,222	89,006	11.1

Source: State of North Carolina Demographer's Office

Analysis of building permit statistics can also help to determine growth rates and development trends in an area. Table 3.3 provides a summary of building permits issued from 2001 through 2007. The permitting data is broken down by township and includes City of Wilson data as well. A total of 3,295 permits were issued over the seven year period, and an average of 471 permits was granted annually across the County, including the City. This figure not only includes new construction but also additions to existing structures for the County. The City of Wilson Building Permit Data shows new construction of residential units only through 2007.

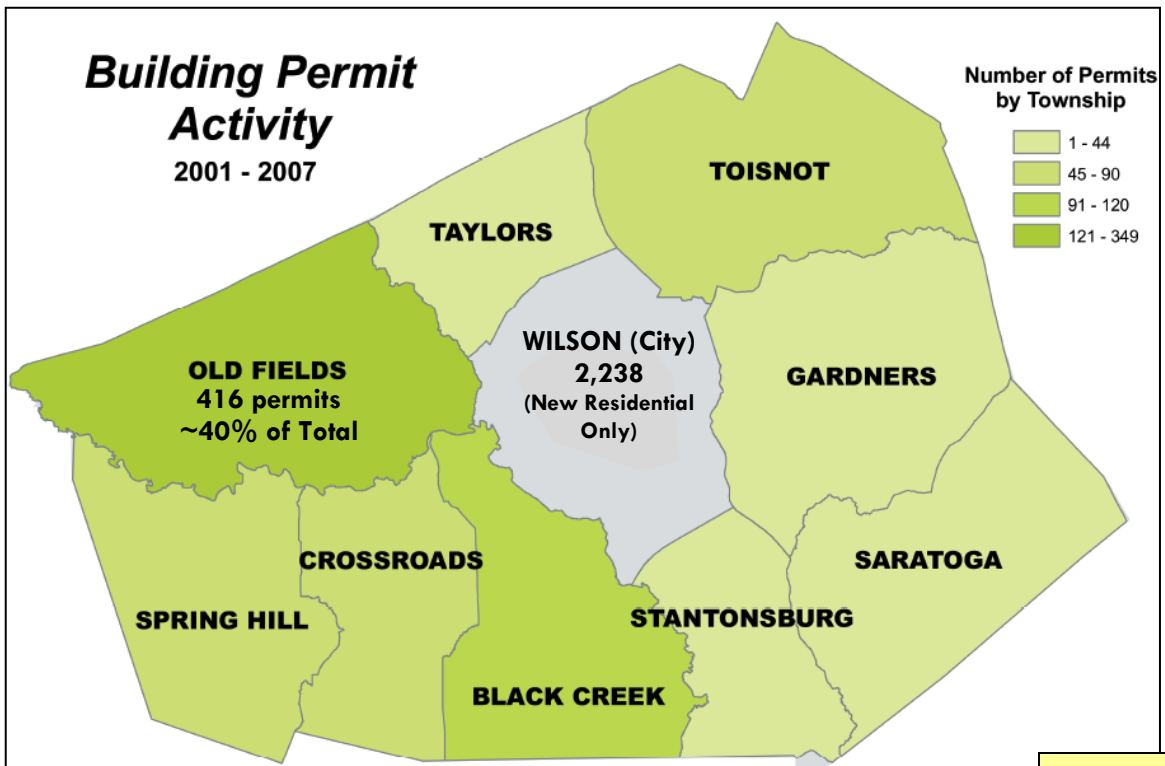
Table 3.3
Building Permit Data

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Black Creek	7	24	21	23	15	22	44	156
Cross Roads	12	6	10	11	11	7	33	90
Spring Hill	11	19	13	17	11	14	36	121
Old Fields	30	45	39	67	68	73	94	416
Taylor	4	8	3	4	5	8	6	38
Toisnot	12	17	11	9	12	13	23	97
Gardners	4	11	6	6	5	4	21	57
Saratoga	10	2	6	9	2	2	6	37
Stantonsburg	13	2	4	6	7	12	4	48
Total	103	134	113	152	136	155	264	1057
Wilson County	103	134	113	152	136	155	264	1057
City of Wilson	425	306	336	339	289	257	286	2238*
TOTAL	528	440	449	491	425	412	550	3295

Source: Wilson County and City of Wilson (Note: * New Residential Only)

The figure below visually demonstrates where the growth is occurring in Wilson County. The area experiencing the highest growth outside the City of Wilson (as demonstrated by the issuance of building permits) is Old Fields Township in the western most portion of the

County – accounting for almost 40% of the total permits. In fact, all of the Townships in western Wilson County have experienced higher growth rates, while the Townships in the eastern portion of the County have seen slower growth trends.



Map 3.2

V. FACTORS INFLUENCING GROWTH

The identification of factors that will influence growth—whether positively or negatively—is vital to an examination of growth management. The following is a description of major factors that have an influence on growth in Wilson County.

A. Proximity to Raleigh / Greenville

Wilson County is located approximately 45 minutes east of Raleigh, the State Capitol of North Carolina and 45 minutes west from Greenville, North Carolina, which is the home of East Carolina University, the second largest university in the state. Raleigh and Greenville saw a 71.3 and 60.2 percent growth rates, respectively, between 1990 and 2006. Rapid growth brings new people not only directly to these areas, but also to the surrounding region. Wilson County is located close enough to commute to and from these areas for employment, and provides a rural character that many people find desirable. As the demand for property near these two rapidly growing areas increases, Wilson County will also grow to help meet the demand.

B. Transportation

Directly related to the proximity to major hubs in the region, is the good physical condition of routes to access these areas. Wilson County has a number of major routes crossing through the County. Interstate I-95, running from Maine to Florida, is the most important thoroughfare on the east coast. In addition to I-95, US Routes 264, I-795 and 301 both provide quick access to nearby shopping, employment, and various

activities. Finally, many major state routes also travel through the County providing easy travel both within and outside of the County.

A major attraction for economic development is alternative modes of transportation, and Wilson County's major roads and two railroads, which provide prime locations for industry throughout the County. Also providing an alternative mode of moving goods is the Wilson Industrial Air Center, located in the western portion of the City of Wilson. Located only five miles from I-95, the Air Center is a major incentive for economic development. The attraction of industry to an area will also bring associated service jobs as well as new employees to the area prompting additional growth. Another asset is the Rocky Mount-Wilson Airport (RWI) which serves the Counties of Nash, Wilson and Edgecombe with regional air service. Located on NC Highway 97, RWI is just 6.5 miles from Rocky Mount, 9 miles from Wilson and only minutes from industrial traffic routes I-95, US 64, 264, 301 and NC 98.

C. Provision of Water and Sewer

The provision of water and sewer can be one most limiting factors in terms of development. Wilson County has an extensive public water system that serves approximately 2,900 customers. The water system, which the County is seeking to expand to the remaining un-serviced area, is primarily a residential system and is not able to handle development of anything more intensive than light commercial. There is no county public sewer treatment system. The County primarily relies on individual septic tanks to handle sewer disposal, and has no plans in the future to develop a public sewer treatment system.

The provision of water and sewer limits the types and densities of development that can occur in Wilson County. High densities can often not be supported by septic tanks, and although much of the County has public water, the water is not capable to support many intensive uses. Developments of higher densities or heavy commercial or industrial uses will have to be located close enough to a municipality in order to receive their services. This limits the type of development that can occur within areas under the jurisdiction of the County.

D. Educational Institutions

Wilson County is the home of a number of educational institutions. First, Barton College and Wilson Community College are both located in the City of Wilson. With approximately 1,200 and 2,000 students attending each institution, respectively, the colleges provide higher education opportunities, job training, employment, and entertainment (athletics and arts) to the surrounding communities. Educational institutions often provide a positive growth factor because they draw in new residents (students, faculty and staff) as well as service industries to help support the colleges. As mentioned earlier, Wilson County is in close proximity to NC State and East Carolina Universities as well.

In addition to higher education, Wilson County also has a very good public school system for grade school level students. However, the class room needs are increasing for each level of the 13 elementary schools, six middle schools, three high schools, and two learning centers. Therefore, the school district is engaged in identifying areas for the development of new school sites based on the recent growth in the County. Having

a good school system often encourages growth because parents are most likely to seek out areas with good schools. However, increased growth will put added stress on the school system requiring more schools to be constructed.

VI. PUBLIC INPUT RESULTS

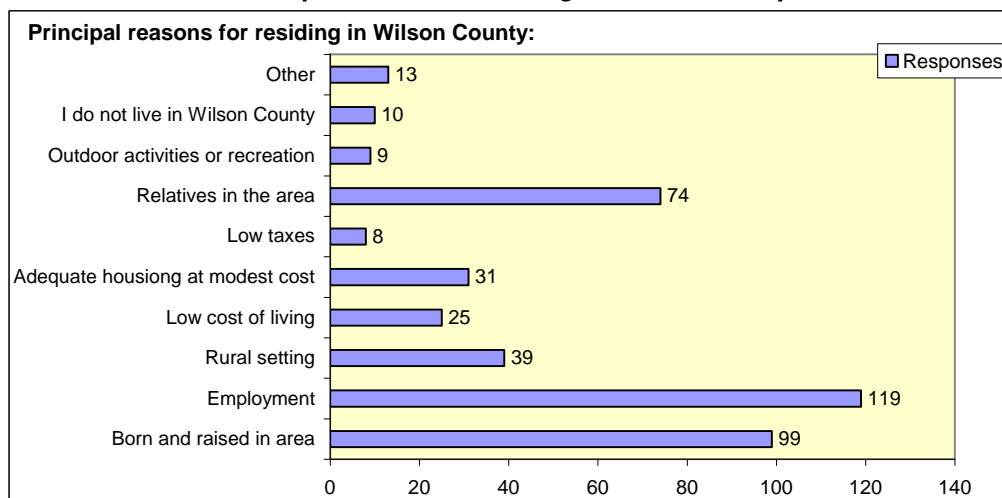
The process utilized in the creation of the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan included a number of opportunities for the public to provide comments prior to the final draft of the plan. Public input was provided primarily through a series of public input meetings, as well as through the use of a public input survey. The comprehensive planning process was detailed in Chapter 2 of this Plan.

The Wilson County Public Input Survey was made available online through a link on the County’s website, as well as in hard copy at local government offices and agencies. In the course of a month, 209 surveys were completed and returned by the public. The 209 surveys only represent 0.3 percent of the total population of Wilson County. To consider survey results truly representative of a population at least a 10 percent response rate is preferred. While the responses of the survey should not be considered representative of the entire County, they do provide some useful information. In addition the responses from the survey, citizens input at the public sessions seemed to support what was reported in the survey. Similar questions were asked at the public input sessions that were addressed in the survey.

Some of the most important information from the public input sessions and survey has been listed below in tabular format. In addition, a copy of the public input survey and the complete survey/input session result summary has been included in the Appendix of this Plan.

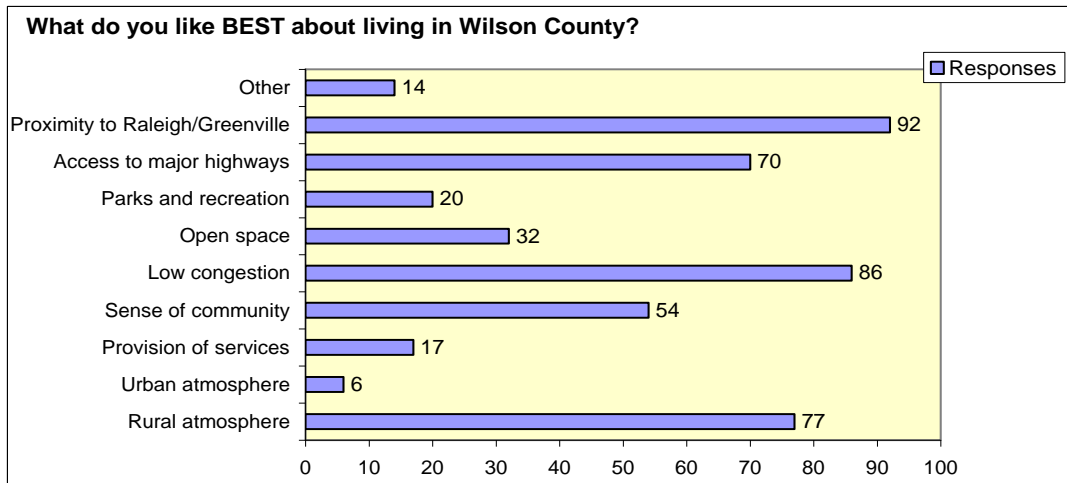
Through initial meetings with the Advisory Committee, public input sessions, and the public input survey it was discovered that the three primary reasons that people reside in Wilson County are employment, being born and raised in the area, and that relatives live in the area. It should be noted that respondents on the survey were able to select up to three reasons for residing in Wilson County. The survey results for this question are show in Figure 3.2 below.

**Figure 3.2
Principal Reasons for Living in Wilson County**



Also supporting the principal reasons for living in Wilson County are the results from inquiring how long respondents have lived in the area. Sixty percent of the respondents reported that they have lived in Wilson for either over 20 years or their entire life. For all respondents of the survey, Figure 3.3 demonstrates what residents enjoy best about living in Wilson County.

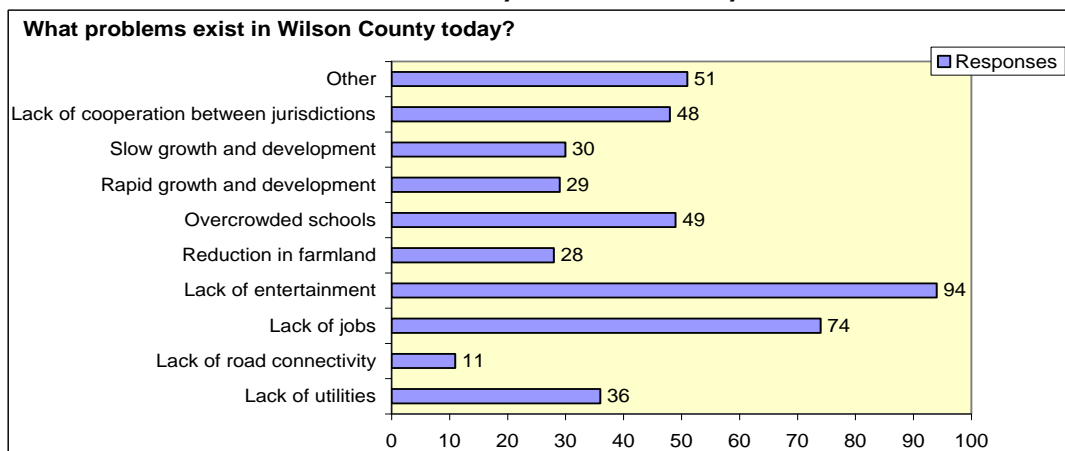
Figure 3.3
Wilson County's Greatest Assets



The respondents of the survey identified the location of Wilson as what they enjoyed most about living in Wilson County. Wilson County's proximity to Raleigh and Greenville, as well as the easy access to major highways, provides opportunities for residents in Wilson County to travel easily around the region. Easy access to the region ties in nicely with another positive aspect of Wilson County—the rural character. People are able to reside comfortably in a rural county, while still benefiting from the advantages of urban areas.

Finally, Figure 3.4 summarizes what the respondents of the survey identified as the major issues for Wilson County. The responses to the survey very closely matched the responses from the Advisory Committee, as well as responses gathered from the public input sessions.

Figure 3.4
Wilson County's Problems Today



Survey respondents listed a lack of entertainment as the most major issue facing Wilson County today. Also receiving notable mentions were the lack of jobs and a lack of cooperation between the different jurisdictions within Wilson County. Many respondents listed their own opinions of what issues existed in Wilson County; some of the most commonly mentioned 'other' responses were: high utility bills/rates, high unemployment and high school dropout rates, and the social divide and economic disparities.

The findings of the public input helped pave the way for the drafting of the Key Issues Report (found in the Appendix). The goals and strategies for the Plan are directly based off of many of the responses discovered through public input and laid out in the Key Issues Report. The public input survey and a complete summarization of all of the public input are also provided in the Appendix of this Plan.

CHAPTER 4 PLANNING AREAS

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PLANNING AREAS

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Because of the size and diversity of Wilson County this study divides the County into three planning areas. Effort was made to create areas that were generally cohesive and related, and which could be identified by natural features. Also, growth patterns, including areas that will likely see similar future growth patterns have been identified together.

Because the County was divided into areas, the land use planning strategies in Chapter 11 were completed in a more manageable and meaningful way. This Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan identifies each planning area, its characteristics, historic growth, and projected growth. It builds on the foundation of information that has been detailed in the preceding chapters, and was used to help develop strategies within Chapter 11, *Land Use and Growth Management*.

II. PLANNING AREAS

The following table (Table 4.1) shows each of the census block groups that make up each respective planning area. Overall, each of the planning areas has grown, with the northwestern area growing at the fastest rate. When calculating the population for each block group it was necessary to split certain groups due to the overlap of groups onto municipal jurisdictions. For the purpose of population information, we did not factor out ETJ areas.

In addition, population estimates have been developed¹ for each planning area. These estimates will help to determine what may occur in the area over the next twenty years, based on actual data. Population projections were only performed for the total population estimate for each planning area. The population estimate projections for each planning area do not contain municipal population census block groups, and therefore will not match the County-wide population projections that are detailed in Chapter 6.

Table 4.1 on the next page shows a number of interesting trends for each of the planning areas. The northwestern planning area is growing at the highest rate, with a 23 percent growth increase between 1990 and 2000. This supports the notion that the area around the Town of Sims and the Buckhorne Reservoir is experiencing the strongest growth pressures. The southern planning area experienced a 20 percent growth increase between 1990 and 2000, while the eastern planning area experienced only a seven percent increase in the same time period. Overall, Wilson County (including the municipalities) experienced a 12 percent growth rate between 1990 and 2000.

Table on following page.

¹ These estimates are detailed in Chapter 6 of this study. For the most part, estimates have been developed based on liner regression using a forecast formula that considers time, which extends past actual growth trends into the future.

**Table 4.1
Planning Area Population Details**

Area	Block Groups	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population Estimate	2020 Population Estimate
Northwestern (55,359 acres ^{***})	14001*	1,240	2,259	13,373	16,449
	14002*	1,410	1,834		
	15001*	784	718		
	15002*	1,377	1,570		
	15003	1,157	1,293		
	16001	636	755		
	16002	727	858		
	17001	905	1,065		
	09001**	600	520		
	Total	8,836	10,872		
Southern (73,453 acres ^{***})	08022*	558	556	8,725	10,470
	08023*	569	614		
	09001**	600	520		
	09002*	628	876		
	09003	618	703		
	10001*	582	984		
	16003*	937	1,140		
	17002*	464	444		
	17003*	31	82		
	17004	1,045	1,352		
	Total	6,032	7,271		
Eastern (92,054 acres ^{***})	11001*	644	619	11,615	12,428
	11002*	821	774		
	12001	1,136	1,483		
	12002	1,094	1,208		
	12003	840	840		
	13001*	1,199	1,433		
	13002	912	849		
	13003*	50	75		
	13004*	800	800		
	13005*	1,146	1,140		
	07005*	1,462	1,634		
Total	10,104	10,855			

Source: U.S. Census

* Split between block group and city or town's corporate jurisdiction

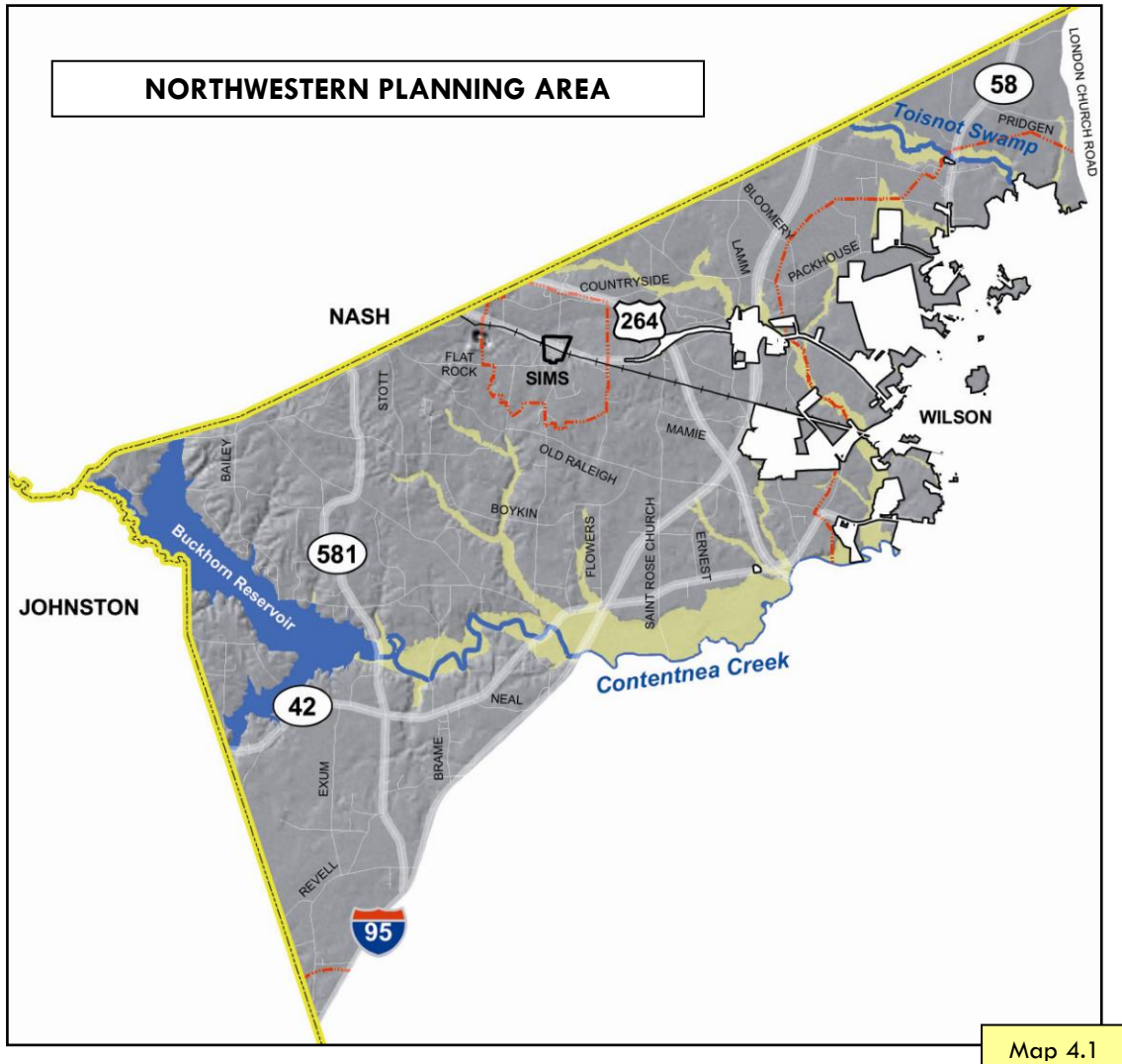
** Split between two block groups

*** This "raw" acreage figure is not the same as calculated for the more detailed acreage utilized for the existing land use in Chapter 11

A. NORTHWESTERN PLANNING AREA

The northeastern area is the fastest growing unincorporated area in Wilson County. This area is bounded by the county line on its northern and western sides. It then runs along St. Mary's Church Road to the south and the City of Wilson to the east. It borders both Johnston and Nash Counties. The planning area is approximately 55,359 acres and had an estimated population of 10,872 people in 2000. The average density is 0.2 people per acre or 126 people per square mile. It is

projected that this planning area will experience the highest rate of growth between the years 2000 and 2020.



1. Transportation and Connectivity

This area includes portions of Interstate 95, US Highway 264, and NC Highways 42, 58, and 581. These highways are key connectors to the City of Wilson and other population centers. I-95 is the major highway that spans the length of the eastern United States. It provides an easy connection to Rocky Mount to the north and Smithfield to the south. US Highway 264 provides a direct connection to the west and east to Raleigh and Greenville, while NC 581 provides a connection for western area residents to US 264, NC 42 and I-95. NC 42 goes directly from this area into the City of Wilson and west to the Town of Clayton.

The connectivity provided by these highways has contributed somewhat to the growth of the area. Raleigh and Rocky Mount are both population and employment centers. Reasonable property values in Wilson County are attractive

to those who do not mind the commute and those who are interested in a rural living area.

2. Physical Attributes

The major physical feature in this area is the Buckhorn Reservoir. The lake serves as one of the primary sources of water for the City of Wilson. The lake is open to the public and has a great deal of residential development potential. There have been at least three subdivisions that have been developed along the shoreline to date. There is a significant amount of relatively large, vacant tracts of land that have lake-frontage. This, coupled with the connectivity of this area to both Raleigh and Wilson make this area extremely desirable for future development.

Because Buckhorn Reservoir is a public water source there are limitations on lot size. Within the Buckhorn watershed residential lot sizes must be at least 40,000 square feet. As mentioned in the environmental section of Chapter 5, it is mandated by the State that a “repair area” be provided for all septic systems, necessitating the 40,000 square foot minimum. If municipal sewer were to be extended to the area, this limitation could be re-evaluated.

Contentnea Creek runs between Buckhorn Reservoir and the county line to the south. It passes through the City of Wilson and the Town of Stantonsburg. The creek is swampy and has a significant amount of floodplain area. These areas limit the development potential along the creek. However, it is assumed that development pressure is not high in these areas due to the increased costs of overall construction and the availability of other land in the planning area which is on higher ground. Juniper and Marsh Creeks also traverse the area; however the amount of floodplain area is minimal in comparison.

3. Existing Land Use

This area is predominantly made up of agricultural and low density residential development. There has been sporadic subdivision development; however most of the new construction has taken place adjacent to, or in close proximity to the City of Wilson. The Town of Sims is located in this area as well. Although Sims is small, it is developed fairly densely and has a sizable ETJ.

4. Utilities

Ironically, although this area is the fastest growing of the three planning areas, it has the least amount of utility infrastructure. County water lines are found in the southern portion of this area only. Areas of the County with public sewer are limited at this time.

5. Growth Constraints

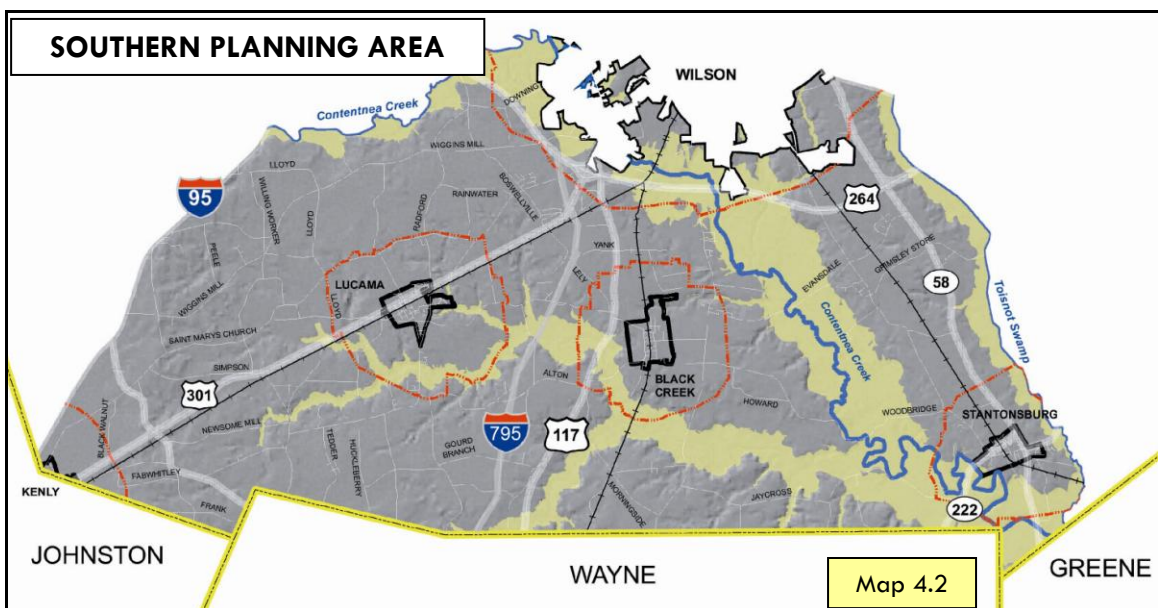
There is a significant amount of floodplain located in this planning area. As mentioned previously, Contentnea Creek bisects the area and has a fairly significant floodplain. Although a fairly broad indicator, at least 1/3rd of the soils in the area are deemed “severe” in respect to septic tank location, with an additional 1/2 being “moderate”. The watershed also complicates development by requiring essentially an acre of land to build a house. Because of the lack of

public sewer it is necessary to utilize septic tanks. The watershed area in the northwestern portion of the area is also a constraint to development.

B. SOUTHERN PLANNING AREA

This area is bounded by I-95 and Contentnea Creek to the west, the City of Wilson to the North, Toisnot Creek to the east, and the Greene, Wayne, and Johnston County lines to the south. It contains the towns of Lucama, Black Creek, Stantonsburg, and part of Kenly.

This area is approximately 73,453 acres and had an estimated population of 7,271 in 2000. This is a density of 0.1 people per acre or 63 people per square mile, lowest of the three planning areas. Population projections indicate that this planning area could grow to a population of over 10,000 residents by 2020.



1. Transportation and Connectivity

This area includes portions of Interstate 95, Interstate 795, US Highways 264 and 301, and NC Highways 58, 117, and 581. These highways are key connectors to the City of Wilson and other population centers. These highways provide access to three of the major commuting contributors to Wilson County (Wayne, Greene and Johnston Counties).

There is a proposed interchange at US 264 and Old Stantonsburg Road (NC 58). This will open up the southern portion of the County to more non-residential development. Currently the interchange is under the Planning and Zoning authority of the City of Wilson and it is likely that the City of Wilson will pursue annexation of the interchange once it begins to be developed. This would lead to the provision of utilities in the area, making it more desirable for development.

2. Physical Attributes

Of the three planning areas, the southern area has the most swampland and areas prone to flooding. Poorly drained soils, such as these, is the predominant problem

for the location of septic systems in the County. CSX Railroad has two rail lines; one paralleling US 301 and one leg branching through Black Creek into Wayne County. Carolina Coastal Railway roughly follows NC 58 through Stantonsburg. The lines run from Wilson into Johnston, Wayne, and Greene Counties respectively. Because of the existence of the lines, this area is more likely to be examined for industrial development. This is one of the primary factors in bringing larger industrial facilities into an area.

3. Existing Land Use

This area is predominantly made up of agricultural and low density residential development and is significantly impacted by the four towns. There has been sporadic subdivision development, primarily at intersections throughout the area. Development has occurred along Saint Mary's Church Road, Wiggins Mills Road, and at the intersection of Evansdale and Old Stantonsburg Roads. Non-residential development in this area has occurred primarily in the ETJ of Wilson.

The Wilson County EDC has an option on an 830 acre property at the proposed intersection of US 264 and NC 58. The EDC is marketing this as a mega site, focusing on industrial development. If utilities are brought to the site, and it is bought by the EDC, it is likely that it influence the future of this planning area.

4. Utilities

County water is located throughout the planning area. Sewer is only within the ETJ of the City of Wilson, with the potential of an expansion along US 264 to serve the impending interchange at US 264 Alternate. The smaller towns in this area have some areas of public sewer; however, limited public sewer is available at this time.

5. Growth Constraints

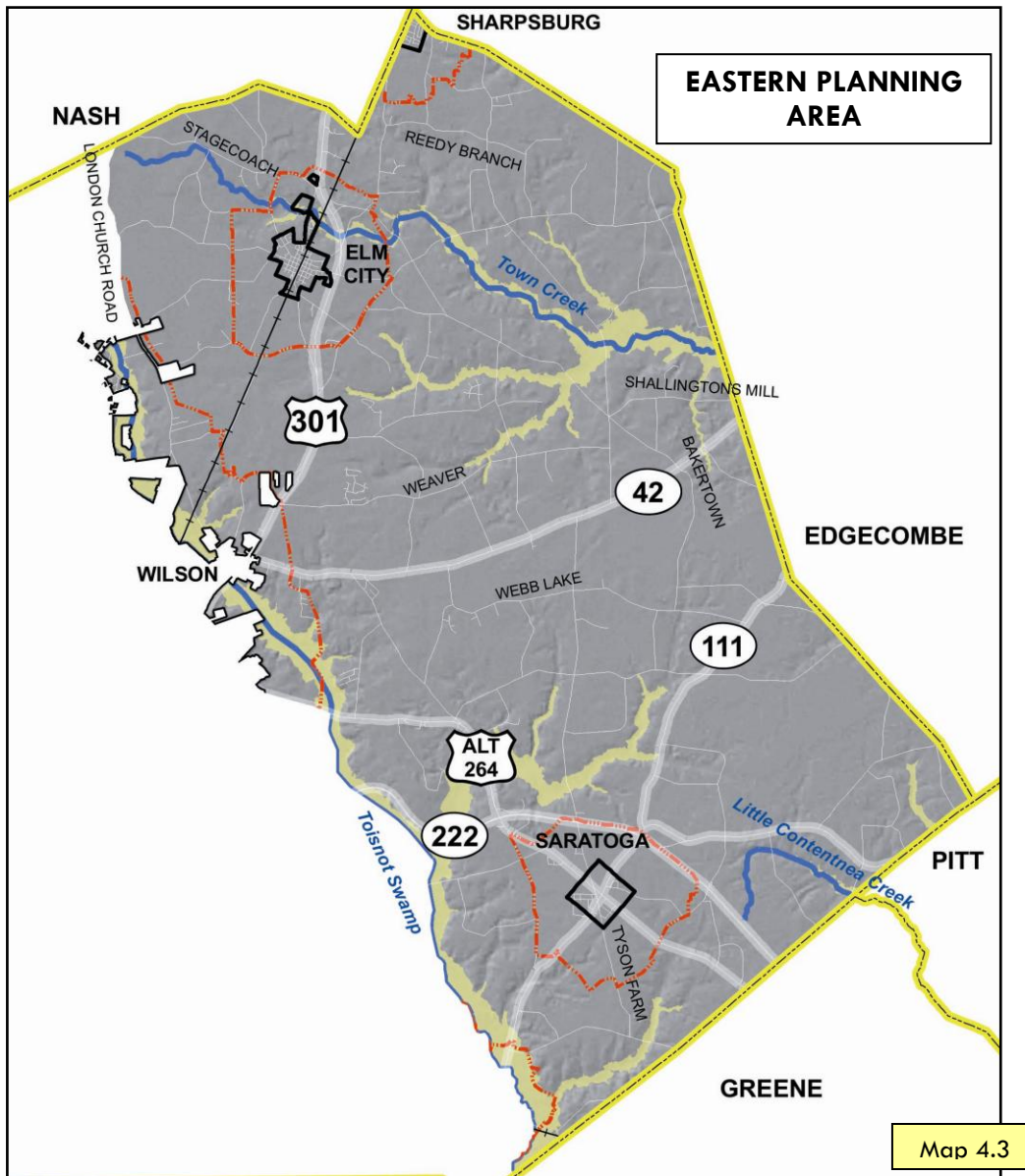
There is a significant amount of floodplain located in this planning area and some watershed protection area. As mentioned previously, Contentnea Creek bisects the area and has a fairly significant floodplain. According to the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Surveys for the county, nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the soils in the area contain soil qualities identified as "severe limitations" for septic tank absorption/location, with an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ being "moderate limitations." The severe and moderate designations are based on general soil patterns and are a guide for identifying general areas of septic tank suitability. Septic tanks are primarily utilized in this area, and as mentioned earlier, some of the smaller communities have limited public sewer.

C. EASTERN PLANNING AREA

The eastern area is geographically the largest of the three planning areas. It is bounded by Toisnot Creek and the City of Wilson on the western side, and runs with the county lines of Nash, Edgecombe, Pitt, and Greene. It contains the towns of Elm City, Saratoga, and part of Sharpsburg.

This is the largest planning area at approximately 92,054 acres and had an estimated population of 10,855 in 2000. The density for the area is 0.12 people per acre or 75.5 people per square mile, second lowest in the group. This planning area

grew at a pace of only 7 percent between the years of 1990 and 2000. At this same rate, the eastern area should expect over 12,000 residents by 2020.



1. Transportation and Connectivity

This area includes portions of US Highways 264 and 301, and NC Highways 42, 58, 111, and 222. These highways are key connectors between the City of Wilson and other population centers such as Greenville to the southeast and Rocky Mount to the north.

2. Physical Attributes

The eastern area is the least concentrated of the three planning areas, with larger lot sizes. Much of this land is used for agricultural uses. There are many creeks and streams in the area, but not as much floodplain. The largest concentration of floodplain area is located in the southern portion around Toisnot/Whiteoak

Swamp, and Town Creek, Cattail, and White Swamp in the northeastern section. Because of the larger land holdings and less dense population, there are fewer secondary roads in the area. However, highway connectivity to Wilson and the surrounding counties via numbered highways provides more than adequate access.

3. Existing Land Use

This area is predominantly made up of agricultural and low density residential development. There has been sporadic subdivision development, primarily at intersections throughout the area. Development has occurred at the intersection of Tartts Mill Road and US 264 Alternate.

4. Utilities

County water is located in much of the planning area. Sewer is found in some areas outside the City of Wilson, running along US 301 to Elm City, and on Tartts Mill and Landfill Roads. These are some of the few areas where the City's sewer lines run outside of its ETJ.

5. Growth Constraints

There is a significant amount of floodplain located in this planning area. This area also has soils that may be the least conducive to residential development. Because of the lack of public sewer, it is necessary to use a septic system to treat waste. However, much like the other areas, the majority of the soils in the area generally contain severe limitations for septic tank absorption.

III. OBSERVATIONS

Overall, each of the planning areas is growing at different rates for different reasons. The growth rate for the County as a whole shows a rather moderate increase between 1990 and 2000, and projects that rate to continue through 2025. However, it is evident from information provided in this chapter, that there are areas of Wilson County that are increasing at a much more rapid pace than the County-wide figure.

The northwestern planning area has experienced a higher growth rate than the county as a whole, and this trend is projected to continue. This area of the County has the easiest access to Raleigh and is close in proximity to the portion of the City of Wilson where many of the new commercial developments are occurring. Development pressures near the Buckhorn Reservoir are somewhat restricted by watershed regulations and the limited availability of county water. Overall, this area of the County has limited public water and relies mainly on well and septic.

The southern planning area is also growing at a more rapid pace than the County as a whole. Interstate-95 crosses through the western-most portion of the planning area and is an attraction for growth. County water lines follow along the major thoroughfares, which can promote limited commercial growth in this planning area. This area has the most significant restrictions from environmental factors such as floodplains, wetlands and some watershed protection areas.

Finally, the eastern planning area has seen relatively little growth, and is expected to continue this trend in the future. Fewer major highways run through this portion of the County, and many of the new commercial uses in the City of Wilson are situated on the far

side of the city. Access to commercial developments is easier when traveling to Rocky Mount to the north and Greenville to the east of Wilson County. Much of this area has historically and continues to be used as agricultural and low-density residential land.

Each of the planning areas has growth potential and constraints, whether those factors are location, utilities or environmental factors, which will partially control their growth in the future. Growth in each of the areas should be monitored to make sure that the services provided by the County (utilities, emergency services, and schools) are sufficient to meet the needs of the varying population growth. The future land use policies made by this Plan are shown on a County-wide map and capture the overall information presented in this section. The data provided and analyzed in Chapters 5-10 focuses on the County-wide level application.

CHAPTER 5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

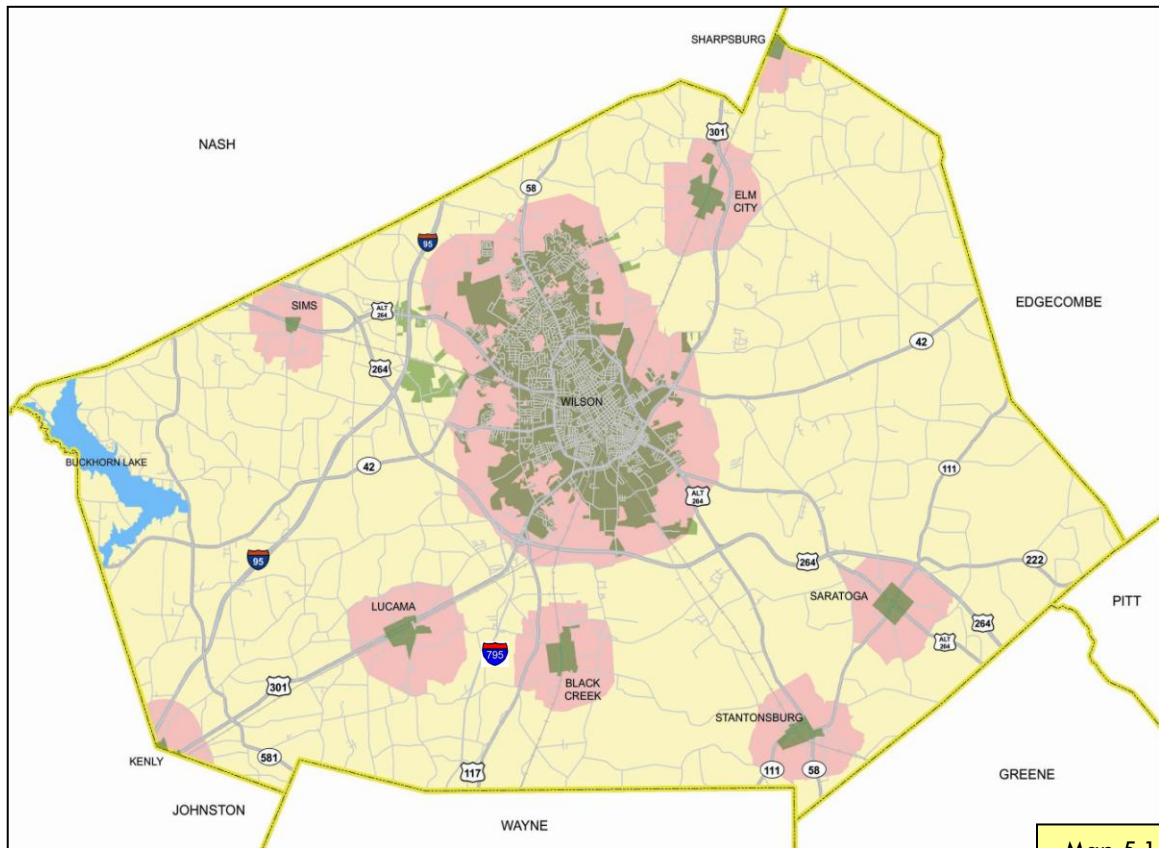
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INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

I. INTRODUCTION

Cooperation between all functioning governments within any County is extremely important for the success of growth management policies. In order to plan regionally, and have coordinated transitions between jurisdictions, a cooperative spirit must be present. County-wide plans, such as this one, must take into consideration each of the jurisdictions within its limits, even if the County does not have planning and development control in these areas. This Plan treats Wilson County as a whole, and the information provided here is truly comprehensive in scope. This Chapter gives a quick snapshot of each of the governmental jurisdictions that operate within the boundaries of Wilson County.

There are nine municipalities located wholly or partially within Wilson County. Each town is incorporated. As demonstrated by Map 5.1, each of the jurisdictions located in Wilson County have established an ETJ surrounding the corporate limits.



Map 5.1

Of the nine jurisdictions, the City of Wilson is the largest. There are six other towns that are located entirely within Wilson County, with Kenly and Sharpsburg only partially within Wilson County's boundaries. The other Towns, as well as the unincorporated areas of the County rely somewhat on the City of Wilson for daily needs and other services.

The Towns, as well as their associated populations are listed in Table 5.1 below. The information in Table 5.1 shows the large disparity between the size of the City of Wilson and the size of the other jurisdictions within Wilson County. In 2005, the City of Wilson was over five times larger than the other jurisdictions combined.

Table 5.1
Wilson County Municipalities Population Growth

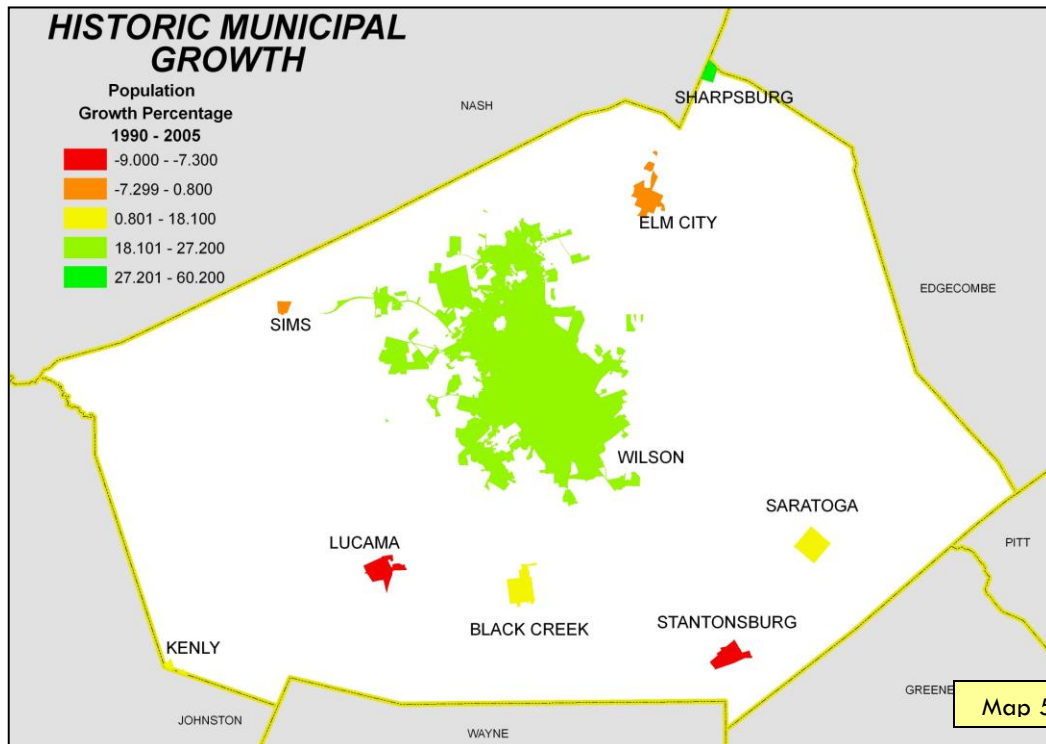
County	1990	2000	2005*	Growth % ('90-'05)
Black Creek	615	714	706	14.8
Elm City	1,624	1,165	1,381	-15
Kenly**	1,549	1,569	1,830	18.1
Lucama	933	847	865	-7.3
Saratoga	342	379	371	8.5
Sims	124	128	125	.8
Stantonsburg	782	726	712	-9
Sharpsburg**	1,536	2,431	2,460	60.2
Wilson	36,930	44,405	46,967	27.2

Source: US Census Bureau

*Estimates provided by the US Census Bureau

**These jurisdictions are located only partially in Wilson County

The City of Wilson is also experiencing one of the highest growth rates in the County. Between 1990 and 2005 the City of Wilson had a 27 percent growth rate, while the other jurisdictions experienced much more moderate rates of growth. The exception here is the Town of Sharpsburg (only partially within the County's borders), which had a 60 percent growth in the same time period. Map 5.2 shows the historic municipal growth rates between 1990 and 2005.



Map 5.2

II. BACKGROUND

A. City of Wilson

Wilson is the largest municipality in Wilson County. The City is found in the center of the County, and is the county seat. The majority of the non-residential development, as well as associated services, are found within the City. Wilson is located almost equidistant between Raleigh and Greenville. This geographic location, coupled with a strong employment base, has resulted in fairly strong growth and economic development.

The City provides the typical services found in a medium-sized municipality. However, there are several services of note that have a direct affect on Wilson County. Wilson is an electric-city, providing electrical power to approximately 65,000 city and county residents. Similar to the electrical service, Wilson is in the process of providing fiber optic cable to each residence and business. This will provide cable and high speed internet service to city and county residents as well. This will act as an economic development tool due to much faster internet speeds for business users.

The City provides water and sewer utility services to growing areas outside of its jurisdiction. The City relies primarily on the Buckhorn Reservoir as its primary source of water. Overall, there should be no need for the expansion of either the City's water or wastewater treatment facilities for at least 25 years.

In the 1990 Wilson Growth Plan, and in the updated 1999 City of Wilson Growth Plan, the City has designated Urban Growth Area boundaries that include both primary and secondary growth areas. These areas are defined as areas where urban-type growth is anticipated over the next 20 years. The boundaries are based primarily on existing and proposed utility lines, road improvements, and local private development interests. Growth areas were determined by utility availability, roads and private development interest.

The Urban Growth Area is broken into two sub-areas, the Primary and Secondary Urban Growth Areas. The primary area is generally where water and sewer currently exists or are planned to be provided within the next five to ten years. Urban development levels can be expected in these areas. The City strongly encourages urban level development in these areas. The secondary area is defined as the area where urban services will likely be available sometime between ten and twenty years in the future. Although less likely, urban level development is encouraged in these areas as well.

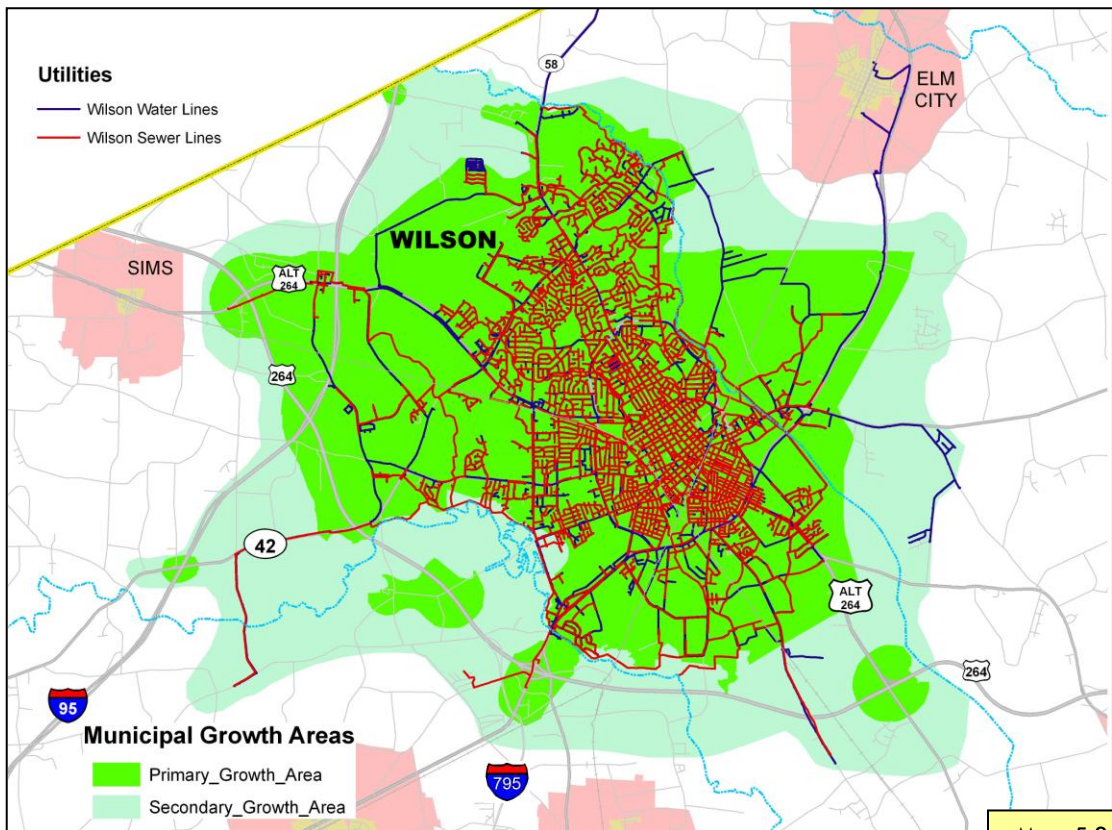
The Urban Growth Area was a primary component of the 1990 Wilson Growth Plan, with the County formally recognizing these areas. However, those designations may not be as formally adhered to since the amendment to the plan in 1999. Either way, these designations continue to be a fundamental component of the overall growth in Wilson County.

In 1990, the City partnered with Wilson County to develop the 1990 Wilson Growth Plan. In 1999 the City made amendments to that Plan; however, the County did not pursue an updated plan at that time.

Wilson, along with Wilson County, is currently participating in *Wilson 20/20*². This process will set forth goals for the City, the County, and other organizations. It is possible that policy changes will result from this document, and therefore changes could also occur to the land use controls and Urban Growth Area.

In 2003 the City made a request to Wilson County for an extensive Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)³ expansion. The request was not granted and based on this request; the County implemented a policy for all jurisdictions to follow in order to make a request to expand their ETJ.

The City feels that based on current trends, the areas to the west and northwest, along with a proposed interchange on Highway 264 to the south, are the areas where future growth is expected (Map 5.3). These areas are generally found within the City's current Urban Growth Area. The urban growth area shown below was defined in the City of Wilson's 1999 update to the Wilson Growth Plan.



² Wilson 2020 is a strategic planning process that is currently being facilitated by the NC School of Government. The anticipated date of completion is sometime in 2008.

³ ETJ is a statutorily permitted enforcement of zoning and subdivision controls in areas outside of the corporate limits. Where zoning, subdivision, and building standards are enforced by a county, the city must make a request, and receive approval from the county before extending their ETJ.

B. Town of Black Creek

The Town of Black Creek located in southern Wilson County, just south of the City of Wilson, was incorporated in 1870 and currently has a population of 706. Although smaller in size, Black Creek has experienced a relatively high rate of growth. In the last fifteen years it has grown by almost 15 percent. US Highway 117 travels through the ETJ of the Town providing access to and from the City of Wilson.

The Town started with a single business in 1838 when the Wilmington and Raleigh railroad was under construction. In 1840 a US Post Office was constructed in the same vicinity as Bardin's Depot and this was undoubtedly the beginning of the Town of Black Creek.

The Town operates under the Council-Administrator form of government. The governing board is made up of five council members and the mayor, which meets once a month. The Town provides water, sewer, electric, and garbage collection services to its residents. The Town also is one of the primary providers of water to Wilson County (not including the City of Wilson). Wilson County currently purchases water from Black Creek to help service the County water system.

Black Creek exercises their zoning authority both in its corporate limits and within an extraterritorial jurisdiction. Within the corporate limits there is a mixture of land uses, but the dominate land use is low to medium density residential. Additionally, there are some low intensity industrial, and a few commercial properties within the town boundaries. The commercial properties help to support the local population; however, residents must travel to other locations for many of their daily needs. The ETJ is almost entirely designated as residential-agricultural, which maintains a very low population density.

C. Town of Elm City

Elm City is the second largest town in Wilson County⁴ with a population of approximately 1,624. Although it is located almost equidistant from Wilson and Rocky Mount, Elm City has steadily lost population since 1990. Over that time it has decreased over 15 percent. Part of this decline is the movement of residents into unincorporated areas. Other possible contributors are the problems that have arisen since 1998 with the Town's sewer system.

Since 1998 the Town has been under a state-imposed moratorium that has prohibited any new sewer hook-ups. At that time it was found that the Town's sewer system was experiencing an inflow of rain into the system. The resulting repairs are estimated to cost over \$6,000,000. Phase I of these repairs have been completed. This included an \$800,000 repair of the downtown area. Phase II is slated to be completed soon. The Town is optimistic that when Phase II is completed that the moratorium will be lifted, however, new connections would require state approval.

⁴ Kenly and Sharpsburg, although larger, are located only partially in Wilson County.

The Town uses four wells for their primary water supply. In the event of an emergency, the Town gets water from the City of Wilson. Based on the lack of growth, water quantity should not be a problem for the foreseeable future.

Sewer issues aside, the Town of Elm City is experiencing interest in development. Requests for residential development are coming in the ETJ areas and if the moratorium is lifted, it is anticipated that the Town will experience an increase in residents.

Elm City's land use is made up of primarily low to medium residential uses, with a majority of the ETJ being residential agriculture. However, there is a considerable amount of land within the jurisdiction of Elm City that is zoned commercial (either highway commercial or downtown commercial) or industrial. The highway commercial area is located on the west side of US Highway 301; the downtown commercial is nestled in the center of the Town, while the industrial stretches along the length of the CSX railroad line.

D. Town of Lucama

Lucama is located southwest of the City of Wilson. It is bisected by US 301 and the CSX railroad. According to 2005 US Census estimates, there are 865 residents of the Town, down from 933 in 1990. Lucama is a full service community. They offer water and sewer services, electricity, and yard-waste collection. Police service is offered by the Sheriff's office. This arrangement is relatively new and has been working well. There is currently no EMS service aside from what the County offers.

Water, sewer and garbage pickup are only offered to residents within the city limits, while electricity is offered to residents within the city limits and the ETJ. Students who reside in Lucama typically go to the Lucama Elementary School before traveling to Springfield Middle School, and on to Hunt High School. Lucama has no capacity issues for any of these services at this time.

Generally, Lucama has the role of a bedroom community with the majority of the residents traveling to other jurisdictions for daily needs such as groceries, pharmaceuticals, and medical visits. Residents travel primarily to Kenly or Wilson to meet these needs. Land uses in Lucama are primarily low to medium density residential. There are some limited commercial uses such as a beauty salon and a Dollar General, and some limited industrial areas.

Lucama is the home of the Whirligigs, which have become a tourist attraction in Wilson County. The Windmill Farm, located in Lucama, is the collection of Vollis Simpson a local outsider folk artist. Whirligigs incorporate complex movements and sounds, and more than 30 have been designed on the property. The sculptures are welded and painted, and are always of a large scale. The Windmill Farm is located on Wiggins Mill Road.

E. Town of Saratoga

Saratoga is located in the south western portion of Wilson County, and is bisected by US Highway 264 Alternate and NC Highway 111/222. According to the US Census

2005 estimate, the population in Saratoga is 371, which is an eight percent increase from 1990. The Town of Saratoga has a three member town board with a mayor. The Town has an ETJ that is primarily comprised of residential agriculture uses.

The Town is currently pursuing regional sewer services with Stantonsburg, Lucama, and Black Creek because of the increasing sewer costs from Wilson. The Town's sewer is currently treated by Stantonsburg, but they are under a moratorium because of water infiltration. The sewer system was installed in 1988, but they are looking into obtaining a grant to correct the problems that they have been experiencing. An allotment of 30,000 gallons per day can be treated by Stantonsburg; however when it rains or during the wet season that can go as high as 90,000-100,000 gallons per day. Studies are being completed to investigate how much it will cost to create a solution for this problem.

Water service is provided by two wells, one of which is for emergency purposes only because it has carbonated water. The Town had a third well available to the residents that collapsed recently. Saratoga is connected to a Wilson County water line, however the line was constructed in 1950 and the County system would provide too much pressure and create leaks in the system. The water lines need to be replaced. Saratoga purchases their electricity from Stantonsburg.

There is a large water plant near Saratoga that provides most of the bottled water for Food Lion. The majority of the land uses in the Town are residential and residential agriculture. Additionally, there are some limited commercial uses, but residents primarily travel to other jurisdictions for their daily needs such as grocery, pharmacy, and medicine. There are 300 acres of vacant land just north of the Town that may be appropriate for future development.

F. Town of Sims

The Town of Sims is located 35 to 40 minutes from the North Carolina state capitol, Raleigh. The Town has a five member council and a mayor who handles the zoning issues for the Town. A clerk works in the office one to two days per week. The tax rate is currently \$.46/\$1.00. The current population of the Town is approximately 125, with a very slight (less than one percent) increase between 1990 and 2005. However, this trend is not likely to continue as the northwestern portion of Wilson County is experiencing many development pressures.

There are currently two wells that provide water to all residents within the corporate limits of the Town. Any residents of the ETJ that want water and sewer services are required to be voluntarily annexed into the Town. One well acts as a backup, but new state regulations will eventually require both wells to be used. The wells can hold up to 75,000 gallons, and have plenty of capacity. The Town's well can most likely handle new development with current allocations, however, larger subdivisions (approaching 200 lots) may require the construction of a new well for the Town.

Sewer treatment service is purchased from the City of Wilson. A grant paid for the sewer lines and the two pump stations to access the City of Wilson's system. Currently, 50,000 gallons per day of Sims' waste is treated by the City of Wilson.

A new subdivision is being built to the south with 60 lots. This subdivision will essentially double the size of the Town. Sims has recently instituted capacity fees, which range approximately \$5,500 for a three-bedroom, two-bathroom home. These fees were based on state averages. The capacity fees have been helping to manage growth. The Town would like to see growth come from the core of the Town out towards the ETJ, not vice versa.

Sims is comprised primarily of single-family low to medium density residential uses. Like almost all of the other small jurisdictions in Wilson County the ETJ is mostly residential agriculture. However, Sims has more industrial uses in the ETJ than any other jurisdiction. Within the corporate limits are limited commercial uses, requiring the residents to travel to nearby Wilson for many of their daily needs.

G. Town of Stantonsburg

The Town of Stantonsburg is located in the southeastern most corner of Wilson County. In the 2005 Census estimates, there were 712 people to be living in the Town. Stantonsburg actually experienced a nine percent decrease in population between 1990 and 2005. Despite a decrease in population, the Town of Stantonsburg is able to provide many services to the residents, including: water, sewer, electricity, police, fire, and emergency services, and garbage collection.

Electricity is offered to residents within the corporate limits and within the ETJ. Additionally, Stantonsburg offers the residents of Saratoga electricity as well. There are over 80 miles of electric line for the Town in Wilson, Wayne and Greene Counties, serving over 1,250 customers. Approximately 425 of the customers serviced by this electricity are residents of the Town.

Water services are offered to approximately 400 customers within the corporate limits of the Town and an additional 100 customers outside the Town. Additionally, the Town sells water to Wilson County. The Town has recently received a USDA grant to perform a roughly 1.8 million dollar upgrade on the water system. Sewer services are provided primarily within the Town limits, with only six customers residing outside the limits. The Town has their own treatment plant, treating wastewater for the Town of Saratoga as well, and has received a \$400,000 grant from the Clean Water Act to upgrade the lines and prepare a pilot study on a new treatment plant. During the wet months, the sewer system, which is designed to handle 375,000 gallons a day, has reached up to 80 percent capacity.

There are currently four full-time police officers servicing the Town. The officers are able to offer 24 hour coverage. This system seems to be meeting the current needs of the residents; however the Town Council has discussed utilizing the County Sheriff on occasions. In addition to police protection the Town also has volunteer EMS and Fire services. The Town offers garbage to residents within the Town. Recycling services are offered through a private contract.

School-aged residents of Stantonsburg attend the local elementary school (Stantonsburg Elementary), followed by Speight Middle School, which receives water,

sewer and electricity services from the Town, and then go to nearby Beddingfield High School.

The Town of Stantonsburg handles their own zoning, and Wilson County does the building permitting and inspections. There has been almost no complaint about the current system as it seems to work very well in timing. The land uses within the Town are primarily residential, while the ETJ is comprised almost entirely of residential agriculture uses. There is one industry in the Town, Singlestick, Inc., which manufactures cigars.

Transportation generally is not a problem in Stantonsburg, however in the spring and summer months North Carolina Highway 58 is heavily traveled by people wanting to reach the coast. The residents in the area would like to see this road extended to four lanes to decrease some of the congestion that occurs during the warmer months.

H. Towns of Kenly and Sharpsburg

There are two towns that are only partially located in Wilson County. In fact, the corporate limits of both Kenly and Sharpsburg only encompass approximately 181 acres of land in Wilson County. Each of these jurisdictions has an ETJ that extend further into Wilson County. The ETJ of Sharpsburg comprises 835 acres of land in Wilson County, while the ETJ of Kenly comprises 1,217 acres. While these jurisdictions are not located entirely within the County, it is still highly important to include them in the planning process to keep the scope of this plan comprehensive and to promote healthy regional planning.

Kenly was incorporated in 1887 as a direct result of the railroad constructed just one year earlier. The Town of Kenly is located in the southwestern tip of the County, and lies in both Wilson and Johnston Counties. The 2000 Census count reported a population for Kenly of 1,569. The Town of Kenly has three exits off of I-95 so a large number of people travel through the Town each day.

The Town of Kenly operates under the council-manager form of government with a six member Town Council. Public water and sewer is provided to residents within the corporate limits. The Town's wastewater treatment plant is currently treating an average of 400,000 gallons of sewage per day and discharges into the Little River. The plant has a capacity limit of 630,000 gallons per day. Water for the public water system is purchased from Johnston County. The Kenly Police and Fire Departments serve a community of about 6,200 residents, covering 36 square miles, in both Johnston and Wilson counties and the Town of Kenly.

Sharpsburg, on the other hand, is located in the northernmost point of Wilson County, and lies within Wilson, Nash, and Edgecombe Counties. The Town of Sharpsburg reported a population of 2,421 in 2000 making it the second largest municipality within Wilson County.

Wilson County provides building inspections for this jurisdiction.

III. OBSERVATIONS

The nine municipalities in Wilson County are an integral part of the daily functions of the County. Residents within the corporate limits of each of the municipalities make up over 70 percent of the total County population; this does not take into account the residents that live in each of the individual municipal ETJs. For the County to succeed in managing future growth, cooperation, coordination and communication between the municipalities and the County government is a necessity. Determining a strategy for this to occur is vital to the overall success of Wilson County today and in the future.

As the City of Wilson is not only the largest municipality, but also the county seat, it is vital for these two jurisdictions to work closely together. According to the stakeholder interviews, public input sessions, and the respondents of the public input survey, an important issue that needs to be addressed is the cooperation between the City of Wilson and Wilson County. Coordination between these two entities needs to be actively maintained because Wilson County provides very limited services for the City. The City of Wilson provides their own service and does their own building inspections, which reduces daily communication between these jurisdictions.

Wilson County has a good working relationship with each of the other jurisdictions. Many of the jurisdictions rely on Wilson County for the provision of building inspections and emergency services. These relationships can and should be expanded upon as the municipalities grow and change. In certain cases, it may be beneficial for both the County and the municipalities, for Wilson County to aid in planning and growth services.

Finally, it is important to mention the Wilson 20/20 Vision Strategic Plan that is a joint County-City effort meant to encompass the goals and vision of the greater Wilson community. This visioning process had a very high rate of public input, and provided many goals for the greater Wilson community. The goals developed in the Wilson 20/20 Vision were reviewed and incorporated into the goals of this plan to help coordinate a county-wide planning effort.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal:

Facilitate an on-going relationship between Wilson County, its nine municipalities and other governmental, non-profit and quasi-governmental organizations.

Strategies:

- Foster open communication
 - Form a Technical Review Committee (TRC) to review plans for new development as part of the new Unified Development Ordinance
 - Include School Board, City, County and NCDOT representatives
 - Establishment of partnerships on the location of any public facility within the county to insure the needs are being met of all citizens, business owners and future residents.
 - County should develop a shared database to track building permit data
- Continued participation and support of Wilson 20/20 Vision activities and development

- Pursue Joint Hazard Mitigation Planning Process between Wilson County and all municipalities.
- Pursue joint recreational and leisure activities with the municipalities in Wilson County
- Partner closely with municipalities regarding future economic development opportunities and industrial site location
- Begin thinking regionally – bringing in Johnston and Nash counties into regional water and land use discussions
 - Inter-local agreements for water line/service extensions

CHAPTER 6 POPULATION AND HOUSING ELEMENT

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POPULATION AND HOUSING ELEMENT

I. PURPOSE

The collection of population and housing demographics is vital to the completion of any Comprehensive Plan. While the collection of this data is often the most basic, it lays the framework for the investigation of all other plan elements because they are dependent on the current and future population. Housing data goes hand in hand with population because the availability of housing is one of the most important limiting factors in terms of population growth. The determination for population growth in the future also lays out projections for housing during the same time period.

II. POPULATION

A. POPULATION GROWTH TRENDS

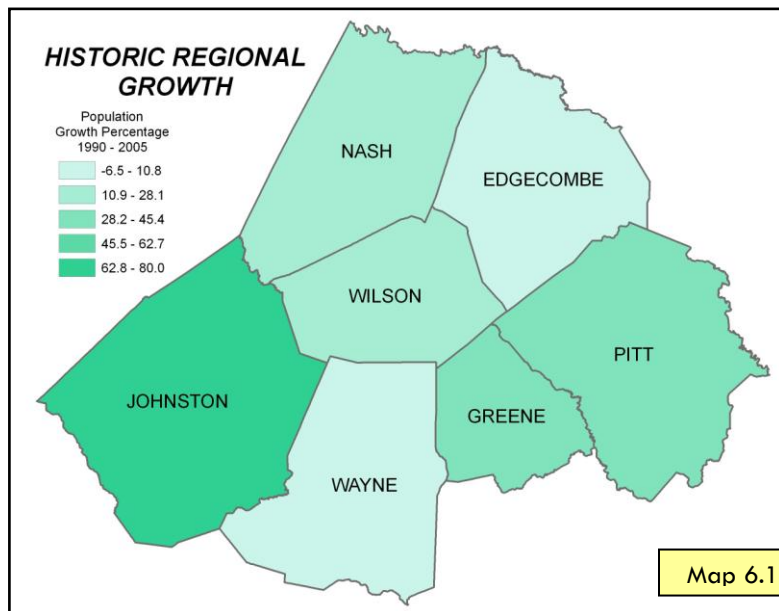
This chapter is written to provide the framework for examining current and projected population characteristics and to provide a clear understanding of how the population affects existing conditions and the future potential for Wilson County. Table 6.1 below shows the County's growth, both actual and percentages, between 1990 and 2005.

Table 6.1
County Population Growth Comparison

COUNTY	1990	2000	2005*	ACTUAL GROWTH	% GROWTH
EDGECOMBE	56,692	55,606	53,034	-3,658	-6.5
GREENE	15,384	18,974	20,173	4,789	31.1
JOHNSTON	81,306	121,900	146,312	65,006	80
NASH	76,677	87,385	91,544	14,867	19.4
PITT	108,480	133,719	143,207	34,727	32
WAYNE	104,666	113,329	115,714	11,048	10.6
WILSON	66,061	73,811	76,826	10,765	16.3

Source: State of North Carolina's Demographer's Office
*Note: 2005 Data is an estimate from the US Census Bureau

Between 1990 and 2005 Wilson County was the fifth fastest growing county in the region. Johnston, Nash, Pitt, and Greene Counties were all higher. Johnston and Nash particularly, have experienced higher growth rates due to spillover from Wake County. Pitt County and Greene County have grown due to East Carolina University, and



Map 6.1

related activities. However, Wilson County has experienced a level of growth that indicates that services can likely keep up with the growth demand.

B. ETHNICITY COMPOSITION

Wilson County has become increasingly more heterogeneous since 1990. For the purposes of this study race has been broken down into the following categories: White, Black, American Indian, Asian, and Hispanic.

**Table 6.2
Population by Ethnicity**

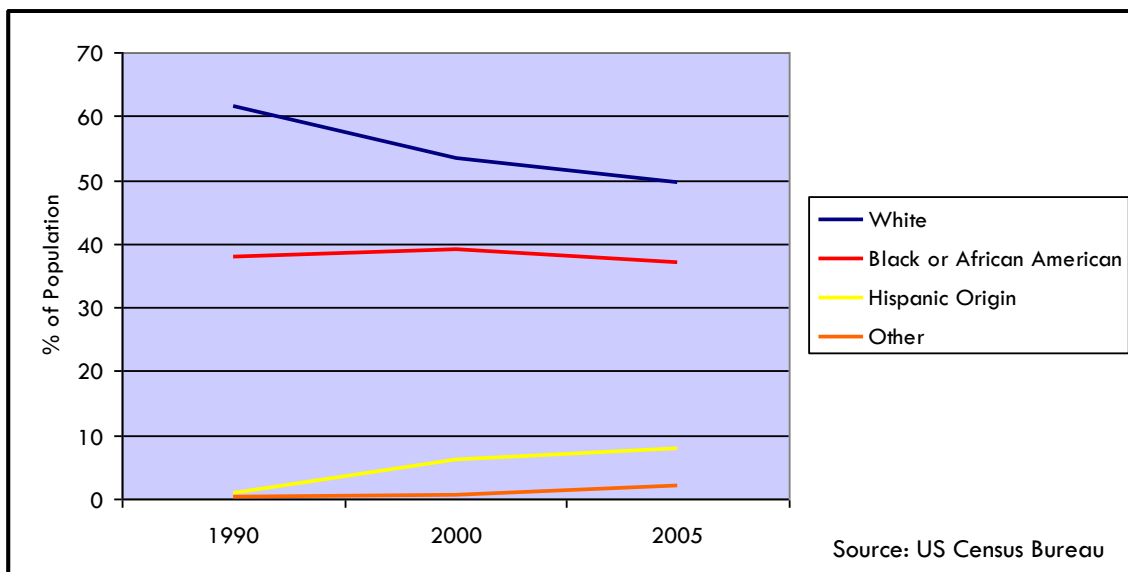
	1990	2000	2005*	% GROWTH
White	40,623	39,498	38,238	-5.9
Black or African American	24,896	29,032	28,735	15.4
American Indian and Alaskan Native	70	199	1,102 ⁵	N/A
Asian or Pacific Islander	177	327	805	354.8
Hispanic Origin	537	4,457	6,055	1,027.6

Source: US Census Bureau

*Note: 2005 Data is an estimate from the US Census Bureau

The primary item to note in Table 6.3 is the increase in persons of Hispanic origin. This growth has been a phenomenon felt throughout North Carolina. However, persons with a Hispanic background now comprise almost ten percent of the County's population. This has major impacts on the types of services and housing that the County provides.

**Figure 6.1
Percentage of Population by Ethnic Group**



⁵ Since 1990, the US Census Bureau has been more inclusive of multiple races in its reporting. Therefore, some categories show representatives that are multi-racial. To show that the ethnic group is represented, these numbers have been included. However, it must be noted that this particular category is made up entirely of individuals that are of more than one race.

C. POPULATION AGE

The population in Wilson County is beginning to see an increase in retirement-aged individuals. The aging of the baby boom generation is showing in the 55-59 year old cohort. In 2005, this age group was up over 1,200 people from 2000. It is almost 2,000 people higher than in 1990. This is significant in that many of these individuals will be at retirement age within the next five years. They will be out of the workforce, and well beyond child-bearing years. As time goes on, it will be necessary to examine the availability of services focused on retirees.

Table 6.3
Population by Age

Age (years)	1990 ⁶	2000	2005*
0-4	4,378	5,062	5,332
5-9	4,924	5,386	5,456
10-14	4,942	5,230	5,130
15-19	4,940	5,308	5,739
20-24	4,664	4,629	4,690
25-34	9,567	9,976	9,468
35-44	10,789	11,305	10,423
45-54	7,061	10,499	10,790
55-59	2,995	3,714	4,960
60-64	3,059	3,198	3,291
65-74	5,140	5,221	5,086
75-84	2,615	3,326	3,412
85+	661	960	703
Total Population	66,061	73,814	74,480

Source: US Census Bureau

*Note: 2005 Data is an estimate from the US Census Bureau

Also of note is the increase in young children. In 2005 the number of children under ten years increased. Although the number was not significant in the last ten years, it was a dramatic increase over 1990 (1,486). This accounted for 18% of the overall growth during that 15 year period. This increase will be re-examined in Chapter 8: Community Facilities as the provision of a quality education can be affected by overcrowding in schools. Table 6.4 below gives a breakdown of primary age groups in the County.

Table 6.4
Population by Age Group

Age (years)	1990	2000	2005*
School Age (0-19)	19,166	20,986	21,657
Primary Child Bearing (20-34)	14,231	14,605	14,158
Secondary Child Bearing and Working (35-64)	23,904	28,716	29,464
Retirement (65+)	8,316	9,507	9,201

Source: US Census Bureau *Note: 2005 Data is an estimate from the US Census Bureau

⁶ In 1990, the US Census used a different set of age cohorts. Therefore, numbers have been estimated in order to correspond with the cohorts used in 2000 and 2005.

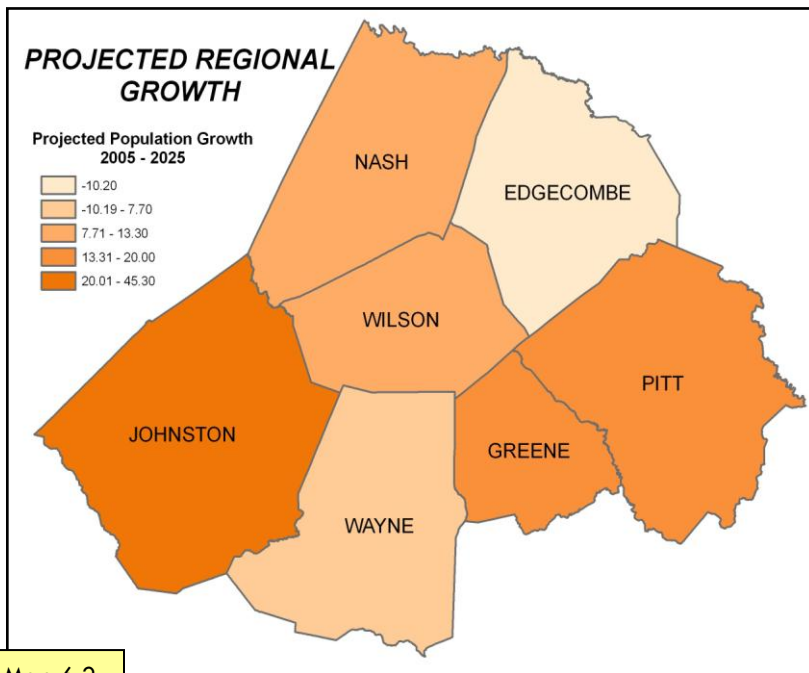
D. POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The State of North Carolina’s Demographer’s Office projected population growth for Wilson County, and the surrounding counties, out through year 2025. The projections were based on a linear trend and were completed using a forecast formula that considers time. Table 6.5 shows population projections for Wilson County and its neighboring jurisdictions.

**Table 6.5
County Population Projections**

COUNTY	2010	2015	2020	2025	% GROWTH
EDGECOMBE	51,329	49,579	47,937	46,054	-10.2
GREENE	21,567	22,976	24,485	25,883	20
JOHNSTON	169,143	193,694	218,868	245,702	45.3
NASH	96,007	100,271	104,736	108,822	13.3
PITT	153,411	163,258	173,193	182,890	19.2
WAYNE	119,222	122,290	125,701	128,444	7.7
WILSON	80,080	82,934	86,222	89,006	11.1

Source: NC State Demographics



Map 6.2

Over the next twenty years, the expected life of this plan, Wilson County is projected to grow to almost 90,000 people. The actual rate of increase will be less than has occurred over the last fifteen years, which is true for each of the counties in the region. Wilson County is expected to grow 11.1 percent from 2010 to 2025. Comparatively, Wilson County is projected to show an average growth rate. The largest growth rate in the area (45.2 percent)

was experienced by Johnston County, located to the southwest of Wilson. Alternatively, Edgecombe County is projected to experience a ten percent decrease in growth between 2010 and 2025. The remaining counties are expected to experience growth in the range of seven to 20 percent in the same time frame. Map 6.2 demonstrates the projected regional growth for Wilson County and the immediate surrounding counties.

Population growth should be expected in this region because of the close proximity to Raleigh and Greenville. Growth within Wilson County has been seen primarily in the northwestern portion of the County as well as within the City of Wilson. The growth rate projected for Wilson County should be one that will allow for healthy growth

without overcrowding and overuse of community facilities. The Wilson County Comprehensive Plan will be a very important tool in planning for the future growth that is expected to occur in Wilson County.

III. HOUSING

The purpose of the housing element is to demonstrate the strength of the housing market and conditions in the neighborhoods of Wilson County. Housing is not only necessary for living, but an examination of housing conditions and characteristics in a specific area can lead to a more thorough understanding of the County's economy. New construction and well maintained housing units indicate a thriving economy with competitive interest rates. An area with little or no new construction and poor housing conditions indicate a struggling economy.

According to the US Census 2000 estimate, Wilson County's population was comprised of 73,814 persons living in approximately 30,729 housing units. From 1990 to 2000, the number of housing units increased by 15 percent from 26,662 to 30,729. Additionally, US Census Building Permit data indicates that from 2000 to 2006 3,366 units of housing were built, which shows a continuing trend in new housing unit construction. The growth rate for new housing units is necessary to accommodate the growing population, and is an indication of an economy that is strong.

A. Housing Growth

In keeping pace with needs of the growing Wilson County population, housing stock must be continually augmented to meet housing needs. Table 6.6 below demonstrates the growth in housing units in from 1970 until 2000.

Table 6.6
1970-2000 Housing Unit Growth in Wilson County

Year	Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units	Persons per Household
1970	17,846	16,709	3.35
1980	23,447	21,549	2.85
1990	26,662	25,093	2.56
2000	30,729	28,613	2.51
2005*	33,175	29,058	2.56

Source: U.S. Census *Note: 2005 Data is an estimate from the US Census Bureau

The number of housing units has increased an average of 2.5 percent per year between 1970 and 2005. If this trend continues at this pace, Wilson County could expect approximately 49,800 housing units by 2025.

The total persons per household in Wilson County have steadily declined between 1970 and 2000, with a slight increase in the 2005 estimate. The decrease in average persons per household reflects an overall trend for the state, as well for the entire country, and it is expected to continue over the next 20 years. As the total number of persons per household declines, steps should be taken to accommodate smaller families.

B. Housing Types

Wilson County’s housing stock is primarily comprised of single-family detached units. However, other housing types, such as attached single-family, multi-family structures, and manufactured homes are also available to the residents of Wilson County. Figure 6.2 demonstrate the types and percentages of the different housing types available to the residents in Wilson County as reported by the US Census estimates in 2005.

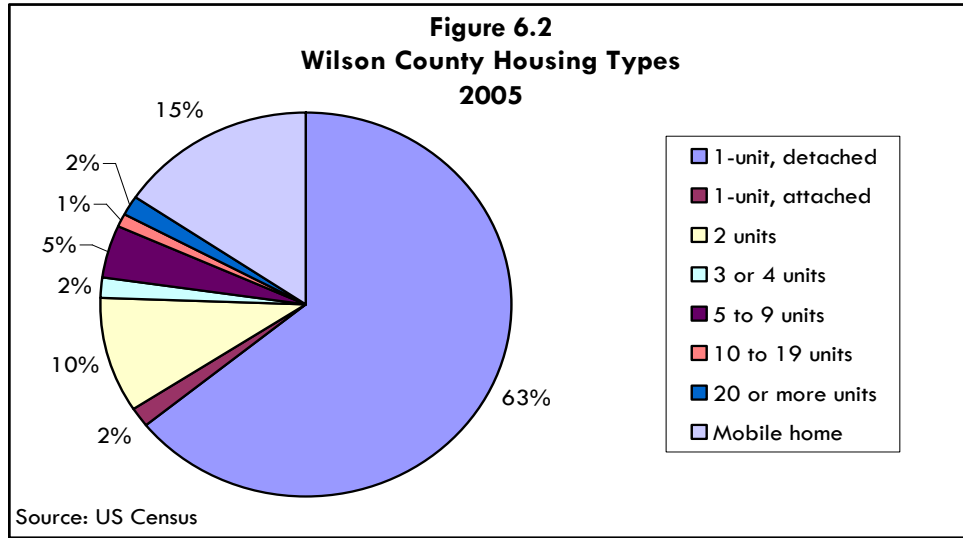


Figure 6.2 shows that approximately 63 percent of all housing units in Wilson County are single-family detached. Additionally, 10 percent of all units are duplexes, and 15 percent of the housing stock is made up of mobile homes. A majority of the multi-family housing types are located in and around the City of Wilson. More specifically, student housing for Barton College in the City of Wilson comprises a majority of the multi-family housing in Wilson County. Diversification of housing types in the more rural areas of Wilson County will assist in maintaining housing affordability and provide options for smaller household sizes and non-traditional families.

The majority of housing units in Wilson County contain 3 bedrooms; however, as shown in Table 6.7, renter occupied units generally have fewer bedrooms than owner occupied units. Due to reporting errors, the total number of housing units for the purpose of this table is 28,613 for 2000.

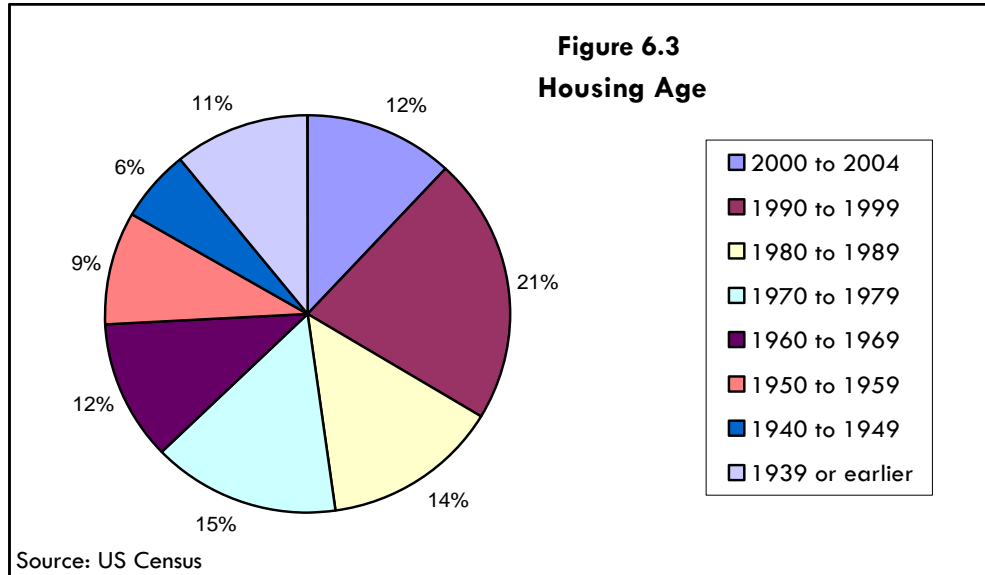
Table 6.7
Wilson County Housing Units by Number of Bedrooms

Number of Bedrooms	2000			
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Total	Percent of Total
No Bedroom	107	346	453	1.6
1	326	2,142	2,468	8.6
2	3,470	5,133	8,603	30.0
3	11,095	2,952	14,047	49.1
4	2,138	445	2,583	9.0
5+	376	83	459	1.6

Source: U.S. Census

C. Housing Age

Wilson County's housing stock age is generally less than 40 years old. As shown in Figure 6.3, 62 percent of the housing stock was built since 1970, while only 11 percent of the housing stock was constructed prior to 1940. Because the housing stock is generally new, most homes are in good condition and have modern amenities.



D. Housing Costs

The cost of housing in Wilson County has remained quite affordable in comparison with the remainder of the State. The State of North Carolina has seen the value of housing units rise rapidly in the last decade. In 2005, the estimated median value of an owner-occupied unit was \$127,600. The median value of an owner occupied housing unit in Wilson County during the same year is over \$20,000 less than the State average. However, it should be noted that between 2000 and 2005 Wilson County saw a housing value increase of 17 percent, which is a rapid increase in a short period of time. This rise could be attributed to Wilson County's close proximity to the Raleigh and the Research Triangle Park, and Wilson's rural, family-friendly characteristics.

**Table 6.8
Owner Occupied Housing Unit Values**

Value	1990	2000	2005*
Less than \$50,000	4,021	1,625	2,514
\$50,000-\$99,999	5,554	6,990	5,383
\$100,000-\$149,999	974	2,753	4,010
\$150,000-\$199,999	344	1,209	2,296
\$200,000-\$299,999	130	613	1,716
\$300,000-\$499,999	43 ⁷	214	406
\$500,000-\$999,999	n/a	81	334
\$1,000,000 or more	n/a	8	0
Median	\$59,600	\$86,400	\$104,500

Source: U.S. Census

*Note: 2005 Data is an estimate from the US Census Bureau

⁷ The 1990 U.S. Census only gives a number for housing units with values for \$300,000 and up.

Renter-occupied houses in Wilson County have also remained affordable. In 2005, there were 12,399 renter-occupied units in Wilson County. The median gross rent for these units in 2005 was \$587, with 74 percent of Wilson County households paying between \$300 and \$1,000 in rent each month. In comparison, the median gross rent for the State of North Carolina in the same time period was \$635.

Generally, homeowners in Wilson County pay a smaller percentage of their household income on owner costs than renters do on renter costs. In 2005, 67 percent of homeowners with a mortgage in Wilson County spent less than 30 percent of their monthly incomes on owner costs. In the same time period, 67 percent of renters in Wilson County spent greater than 20 percent of their income on renter costs.

E. Occupancy Rates and Tenure

According to Table 6.9 below, the total number of occupied units in Wilson County rose 12 percent between 1990 and 2000. In comparison, the largest increases in the municipalities of Wilson County were Sharpsburg (35 percent), Saratoga (15 percent), and Black Creek (13 percent). The Towns of Elm City and Stantonsburg saw declines in the overall number of occupied units. Wilson County saw another small increase in occupied housing units between 2000 and 2005 of one percent.

Table 6.9
Number and Type of Occupied Housing Units

	1990			2000			2005		
	Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied	Total	Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied	Total	Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied	Total
Wilson County	14,869	10,224	25,093	17,500	11,113	28,613	16,659	12,399	29,058
City of Wilson	7,132	7,329	15,383	8,820	8,276	17,296	Detailed Township Data not available until 2010 Census. The 2005 Census Data is an estimate from the US Census Bureau.		
Black Creek	187	56	243	210	69	279			
Elm City	403	193	596	353	121	474			
Kenly	350	307	657	318	353	671			
Lucama	232	136	368	223	164	387			
Saratoga	87	48	135	114	44	158			
Sims	36	20	56	36	25	61			
Sharpsburg	292	284	576	496	388	884			
Stantonsburg	228	88	316	225	80	305			

Source: U.S. Census

Note: 2005 Data is an estimate from the US Census Bureau

Wilson County has historically had a very healthy rate of occupied units. In 2000, Wilson County had 6.9 percent the total housing units vacant. According to housing experts a healthy vacancy rate is generally between five (5) and seven (7) percent. A vacancy rate between five (5) and seven (7) percent provides room for people to move into and out of new homes with a high confidence of easily finding another place to live. Vacancy rates are very similar for the municipalities in Wilson County; however, Kenly, Sims and Sharpsburg all have vacancy rates over 11 percent.

Units that are occupied have a broad range of occupant tenure. In the 2005 Census count it was reported that 77 percent of the occupants moved into the unit after 1990.

The occupants of the housing stock in Wilson County have generally been in their homes for less than 15 years, with only 23 percent residing in their current residence since 1980. This is not an uncommon trend, nationally people are moving more often than they ever have before.

F. Urban and Rural Housing Composition

Wilson County is comprised of 374.2 square miles of incorporated and unincorporated land. For the purpose of housing unit investigation, units located within incorporated land (urban) are structures found within the corporate limits of any municipality in Wilson County, and housing units located in unincorporated areas are structures that are outside those limits. Of the 30,729 housing units located in Wilson County in 2000, 63 percent (19,286 units) are located in urban clusters, while the remaining 11,443 units are located in unincorporated portions of the County.

**Table 6.10
Urban and Rural Population**

	1990		2000	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Population	36,930	29,131	46,483	27,331
Housing Units	15,383	11,279	19,286	11,443

Generally, dense single-family neighborhoods and multifamily units are located in the incorporated portions of the County. Mobile homes are almost entirely located in the unincorporated areas. The provision of public utilities has historically guided higher density neighborhoods to incorporated areas where services can be provided. The concentration of housing units in incorporated areas has helped to maintain the rural nature of Wilson County, while allowing housing development to occur to support the growing population.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

The population has steadily increased in Wilson County over the past 20 years, and is expected to continue this trend another 20 years into the future. At this rate, Wilson County should expect a population of approximately 90,000 residents by 2025. While the growth rates seen in Wilson County are average for the region, the County will need to ensure proper preparation so that essential services are still provided in an efficient manner. The age cohort representing retirement age citizens should be carefully monitored, as this group is expected to continue to increase in size. Proper housing and services need to be maintained for persons that are older. Likewise, the growing Latino population in Wilson County also has needs for a diversified housing stock and school systems with bilingual teachers.

Housing stock and population growth should be directly related. As population grows within an area, it is expected that new housing stock will be constructed to support the residents. The survey indicated a split opinion on whether adequate housing was available, but housing affordability was an important issue for a majority of the respondents. The provision of services should also be related to the population growth projected by the State of North Carolina’s Demographer’s Office, as reported by this Plan. The provision of essential services is covered in greater detail in Chapter 8: Community Facilities.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal:

Promote residential development that maintains the rural nature of the area that is safe and attractive – meeting the needs of the population.

Strategies:

- Encourage housing in areas where appropriate services are available including schools, water, sewer, road networks, emergency services and other such needed services to support new development.
- Encourage Conservation Subdivision Development Design, especially in the urbanizing areas (Primary) and transitional areas (Secondary).
- Support the provision of housing to meet the needs of the population.
- Plan for the housing needs of an aging population
- Encourage policies to retain younger populations
 - Work closely with the City of Wilson on the development of its comprehensive plan as aging and younger populations are seeking more compact urban environments

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
◆
WILSON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

CHAPTER 7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

Wilson County has a firm economic development history. Starting as one of the strongest tobacco markets in the world, it progressed into being a tobacco processing center. During the 1850's the Hackney Wagon Company was established. This company grew into one of the most modern and complete facilities in the southeast, supplying 1 in 60 of the entire wagon demand in the United States.

In more recent times, business activity in the City of Wilson and Wilson County has continued to grow. The Wilson Economic Development Council began in 1957 as the Wilson Industrial Council. This board was appointed jointly by the Wilson County Commissioners and the Wilson City Council. The primary duties of this board were to actively market the area and to make it more attractive to industrial prospects. Since its inception the Council has worked to create the Wilco and Hackney Industrial Parks. Wilson County Properties, Inc. was later created to support the development of these parks and other tracts in the County. Wilson Corporate Park is a result of the efforts of this group. The Wilson Economic Development Council (EDC) is still in existence, and follows the same directive that was established in the 1950s.

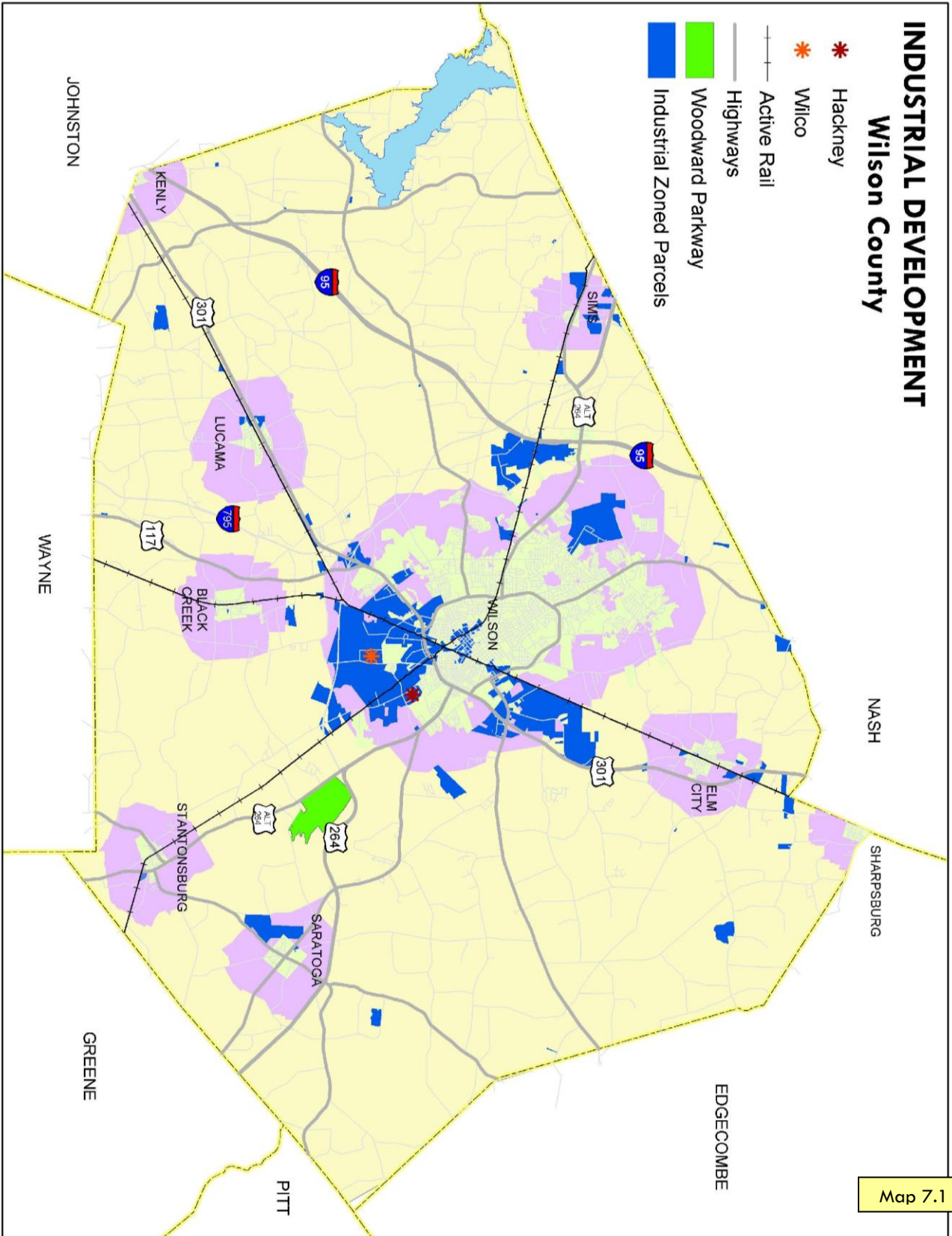
II. CURRENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The EDC is funded equally by the City of Wilson and Wilson County, with an average yearly operating budget of approximately \$450,000. The EDC has a strategic plan that is updated every five years. In that plan, they identify five major industries in which to target; life sciences/pharmaceuticals, automotive, building products, foods, and defense/security, with a focus on smaller plants of between 25 and 100 employees.

Industrial development is largely found within the municipal limits of the City of Wilson. The County's water system is designed primarily for residential usage and there is no county owned sewer disposal system. Although three of the largest industries; Bridgestone, Merck, and Saint Gobain Containers, are located in the County, they are on the City's water and sewer systems. This shows that the entire county, as long as the requisite infrastructure is available, has the opportunity for economic development.

The EDC has two established industrial parks, Wilco and Hackney. There are no immediate plans to develop another park, however if the need arose, it would likely be a large park of at least 500 acres. The EDC has moved away from developing smaller sites, opting out of competing with private developers. The EDC currently has an option on approximately 830 acres outside of Wilson at the intersection of highways 264 and 58. This "mega site", also known as Woodward Parkway, would net approximately 670 acres of developable land and is located in a relatively undeveloped portion of the County. Map 7.1 shows the location of the industrial parks, properties zoned for industrial uses, and the potential mega-site.

The mega-site would be significant in two ways. The first is that it is easier to assemble, and therefore develop, land in the eastern portion of Wilson County. Overall, parcels are larger in this area and it is easier to deal with a smaller number of property owners. The second point is that the EDC strives to make the County attractive as a whole. Many of the larger industries are located on the eastern side of Wilson.



III. WORKFORCE AND COMMUTING

One of the primary concerns to the EDC is the lack of an available local workforce. The focus on smaller industries is partly a result of the lack of potential workers. Many people in the workforce do not have the requisite skill sets to work in the highly skilled positions that are being created. Lower level employment has a problem as well. Many of the potential job candidates for lower paying and primary food-related positions cannot pass the drug test or criminal background check that is required by employers. The EDC is currently working with Wilson Tech on a job training curriculum.

Table 7.1, below, provides an analysis of the labor force in Wilson County between the years 1990 and 2005. One piece of notable information from the table below is the increasing unemployment rate in Wilson County. In 1990 the unemployment rate was 6.6 percent, by 2000 it rose to 7.2 percent, and in 2005 the unemployment rate rose again to 8.3 percent. The national average in those years was 5.5, 5.8, and 6.4 percents⁸, respectively.

Table 7.1
Labor Force in Wilson County

	1990		2000		2005	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Persons 16 Years +	50,650	100	57,083	100	57,256	100
In Labor Force	33,488	66.1	36,184	63.4	37,859	66.1
Civilian Labor Force	33,391	66	36,123	63.3	37,859	66.1
Employed	31,193	61.6	33,508	58.7	34,733	60.7
Unemployed	2,198	6.6	2,615	7.2	3,126	8.3
Armed Forces	97	0.2	61	0.1	0	0
Not in Labor Force	17,162	33.9	20,899	36.6	19,397	33.9
NC Unemployment	n/a	4.6	n/a	5.6	n/a	7.1

Source: U.S. Census

Much of the regional workforce comes to Wilson County from adjacent counties. The following table and maps show the daily commuting patterns to and from Wilson County.

Table 7.2
Regional Labor Force (2005)

	Edgecombe ⁹		Greene		Johnston		Nash		Pitt		Wayne		Wilson	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Persons 16 Years +	42,327	100	14,779	100	93,069	100	67,663	100	105,514	100	86,989	100	57,256	100
In Labor Force	25,155	59.4	8,528	57.7	62,248	66.9	42,014	62.1	69,419	65.8	53,790	61.8	37,859	66.1
Civilian Labor Force	25,142	59.4	8,513	57.6	62,099	66.7	41,916	61.9	69,260	65.6	50,303	57.8	37,859	66.1
Employed	22,720	53.7	7,893	53.4	59,641	64.1	39,609	58.5	64,565	61.2	47,120	54.2	34,733	60.7
Unemployed	2,422	9.6	620	7.3	2,458	3.9	2,307	5.5	4,695	6.8	3,163	5.9	3,126	8.3
Armed Forces	13	0.03	15	0.1	149	0.2	98	0.1	159	0.2	3,487	4	0	0
Not in Labor Force	17,172	40.6	6,251	42.3	30,821	33.1	25,649	37.9	36,095	34.2	33,199	38.2	19,397	33.9

Source: U.S. Census

⁸ This information is estimated for the year 2006, not 2005.

⁹ This information is available only for 2000.

Based on the problems listed above with the local labor force, you can see that within the seven county region, there are almost 300,000 people in the labor force, with several counties having fairly high unemployment rates. Wilson County's 2005 unemployment rate was 8.3, giving it the second highest unemployment rate of all of the surrounding counties. This topic was repeatedly mentioned by the advisory committee as well as the public input sessions and the public input survey as being one of Wilson County's foremost issues.

Wilson County experiences net in-commuting on a daily basis from all of its neighboring counties. In 1990 the exception was Pitt County, however in 2000 that number was reversed. Much of this inflow is due to the industrial nature of Wilson County. Nash County is of particular interest in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of in-commuters from Nash increased from 29 to 759.

**Table 7.3
Commuting Levels**

Incoming Commuters to Wilson County from:			Outgoing Commuters to:		
County	Number		County	Number	
	1990	2000		1990	2000
Wilson	25,580	26,255	Wilson	25,580	26,255
Nash	2,060	3,216	Nash	2,031	2,457
Wayne	1,203	1,342	Wake	721	1,143
Edgecombe	850	1,121	Johnston	637	749
Johnston	953	1,051	Edgecombe	458	576
Greene	516	639	Pitt	339	493
Wake	283	622	Wayne	274	352
Pitt	212	561	Halifax	49	110

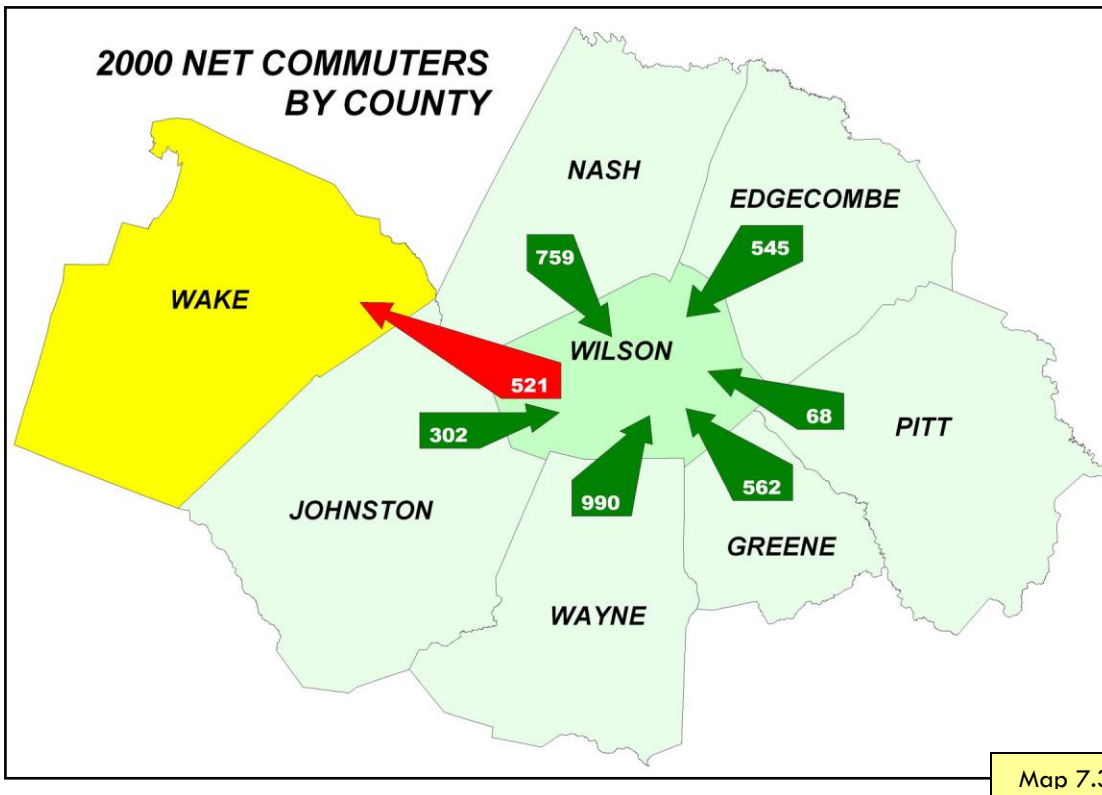
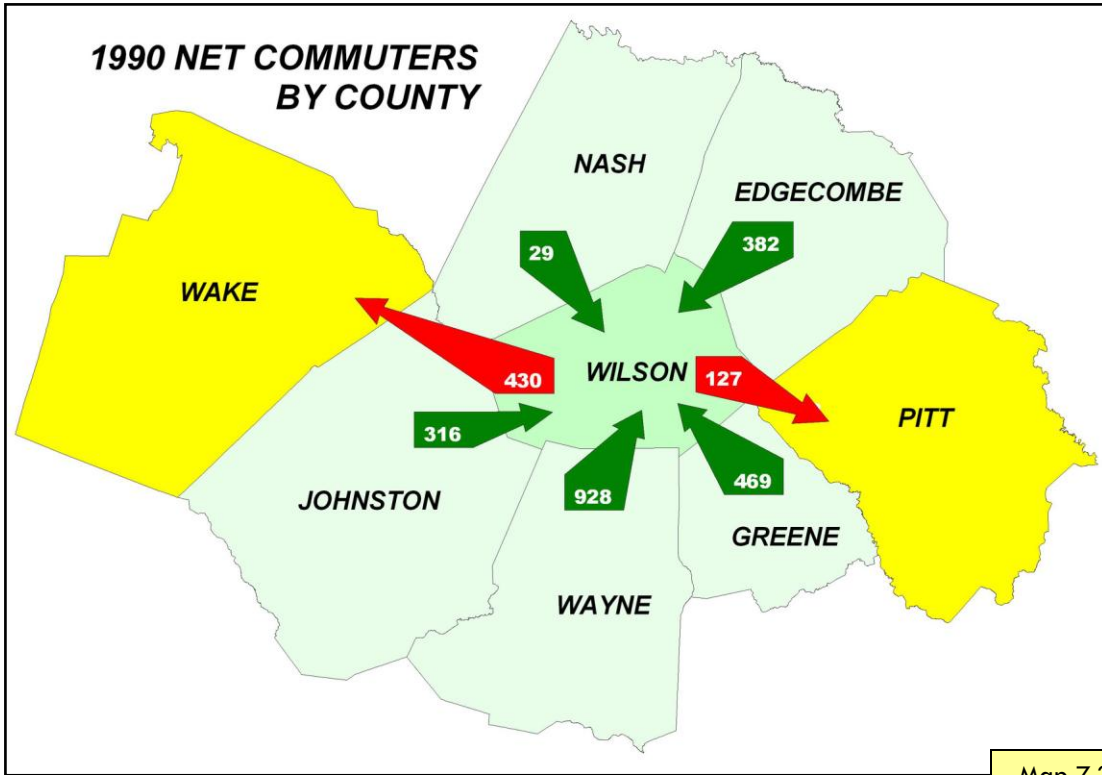
Source: U.S. Census

**Table 7.4
Net Commuting by County**

County	1990	2000
Wake	-438	-521
Pitt	-127	68
Nash	29	759
Johnston	316	302
Edgecombe	392	545
Greene	469	562
Wayne	929	990

Source: U.S. Census

In addition the maps on the following page help to illustrate the information provided above. In 1990 commuters left Wilson County to work in both Wake and Johnston County. The remainder of the surrounding counties commuted into Wilson for employment. However, in 2000 commuters primarily left Wilson County to travel to Wake County (Raleigh), and commuters from Johnston County began commuting into Wilson. This information helps to show that jobs are made available in Wilson County, however, the jobs may be specialized or the workers may not be educated causing a high unemployment rate for people living in Wilson County.



In addition to the number of available jobs another primary reason for the number of in-commuters is higher wages. Wilson County has the 9th highest weekly wage in North Carolina.

Table 7.5
Family and Household Income

Income	2000		2005	
	Families	Households	Families	Households
Less than \$10,000	1,829	4,530	955	3,364
\$10,000-\$14,999	1,233	2,418	1,516	2,465
\$15,000-\$24,999	2,511	4,164	2,995	4,920
\$25,000-\$34,999	2,655	3,710	2,375	3,771
\$35,000-\$49,999	3,890	4,977	3,684	4,810
\$50,000-\$74,999	4,343	5,031	3,560	4,371
\$75,000-\$99,999	1,807	1,992	2,533	2,699
\$100,000-\$149,000	996	1,084	1,656	1,937
\$150,000-\$199,999	342	391	344	344
\$200,000 or more	310	363	199	377
Median Income	\$41,551	\$33,116	\$41,311	\$35,033

Source: US Census

Table 7.6
Median Household Income by County

County	2000	2005	Change (%)
Edgecombe	\$30,983	n/a	n/a
Greene	\$32,074	n/a	n/a
Johnston	\$40,872	\$45,208	10.6
Nash	\$37,147	\$38,957	4.9
Pitt	\$32,868	\$31,979	-2.7
Wayne	\$33,942	\$35,928	5.9
Wilson	\$33,116	\$35,033	5.8

Source: US Census

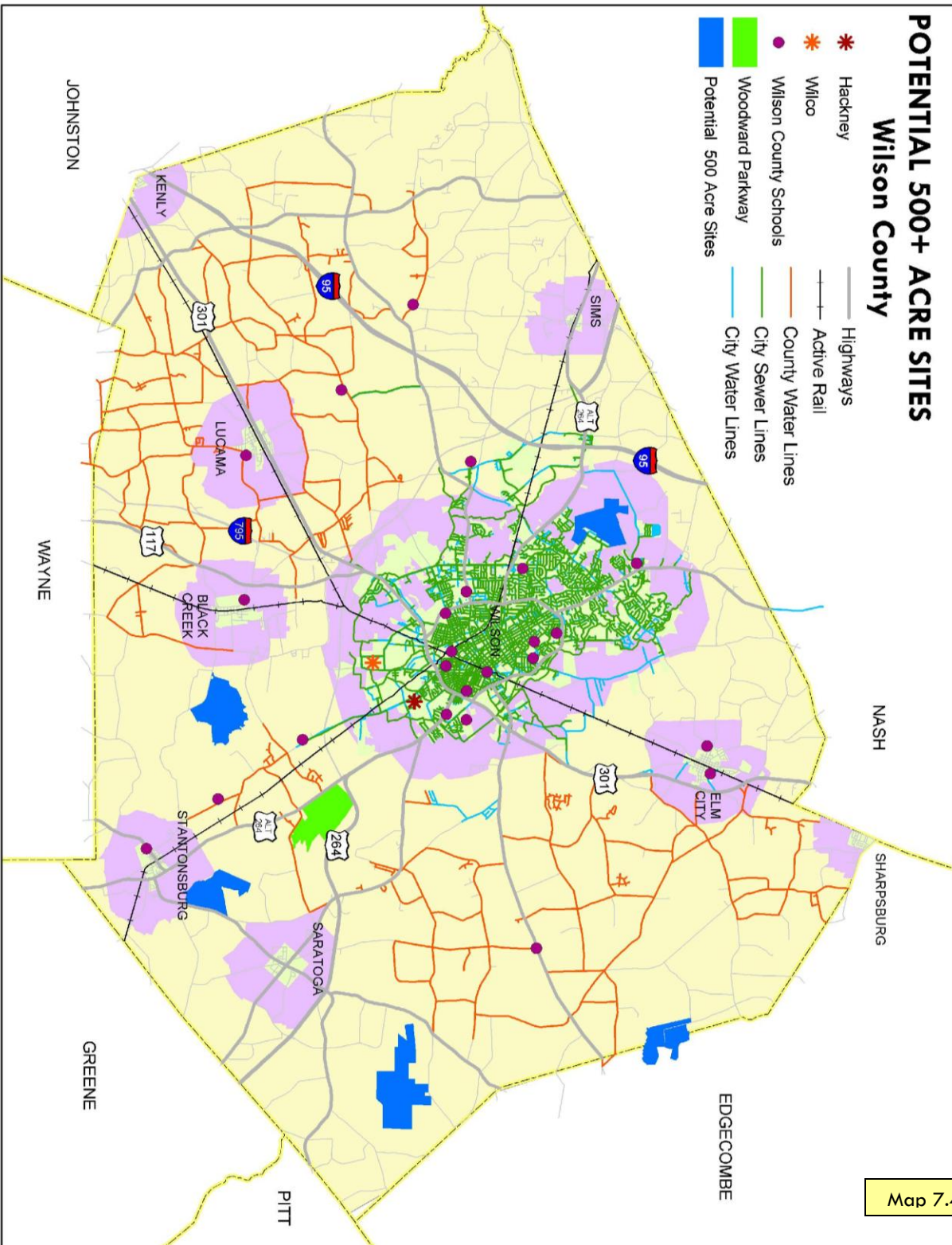
IV. FUTURE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

When considering what makes a good industrial location the EDC generally focuses on several major attributes; proximity to interstate-quality highways, major water (12"-16') and sewer (15" with pump stations when needed) lines, and rail access. They avoid areas that have wetlands, or which are located with the floodplain of a waterway, and sites that are located in close proximity to schools or subdivisions. Based on the physical attributes, the northeastern portion of the County has the most potential, while the southwestern area has the least.

The state of North Carolina annually looks to Wilson County to analyze if a 500-1,000 acre site is feasible. The EDC generally works with the County to identify through Geographic Information Systems (GIS)¹⁰ potential sites. The following map shows possible sites of over 500 acres. A description of each of the site's abilities to meet the selection

¹⁰ GIS is an acronym for geographic information systems. GIS is a software program that allows the user to prepare models and maps inside of a computer. These computer models, along with the tools to analyze them make up GIS.

criteria has been provided on the following page. These sites are identified as potential sites only. The availability of adequate water and sewer treatment is paramount to the location of an industry.



According to the analysis done in this project, there are five sites in Wilson County over 500 acres in size. All of these sites, except the Wilson Industrial Air Center, are located outside the city limits of any jurisdiction within Wilson County. The criteria, as detailed above are acreage at or above 500 acres, proximity to major highways, proximity to rail lines, and proximity to suitable public water and sewer systems. Sites are avoided that are affected by flood hazard areas, wetlands, subdivisions and schools.

Site #1 is the Wilson Industrial Air Center; this site has no potential to be redeveloped. Sites #2 and #3 are located in relatively close proximity to both highway and rail; extensions could potentially be made to the existing City of Wilson utility lines to service these sites. The physical location criteria (proximity to highways/rail) would tend to count out sites #4 and #5, as both of these sites are located a considerable distance from the nearest rail line, and are located further from major highways than the other sites. Suitable water and sewer lines would be difficult to locate in this area.

From the initial physical analysis it appears that sites #2 and #3 are the most suitable for potential industrial development. However, both of these sites are plagued by environmental issues as they are both located near the flood hazard area and wetlands. At this time, there are very limited sites that meet the criteria described above for industrial development. This analysis does not take into account smaller parcels that could be purchased together to meet the acreage requirements.

The following table investigates the economic sectors (from 2002) that currently exist in Wilson County and displays the sales, payroll and number of employees for each.

Table 7.7
Economic Sectors (2002)

NAICS Sector	Number of Establishments	Sales, Shipments, and Receipts (\$1,000)	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)	Number of Employees
Manufacturing	95	5,825,580	330,225	8,861
Retail Trade	383	779,219	73,663	3,935
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	65	33,368	4,708	212
Professional, Scientific, Tech	110	n/a	n/a	n/a
Administrative, Support, Waste Management	85	50,265	22,989	1,449
Educational	5	1,278	492	38
Health Care and Social Assistance	175	253,385	114,917	3,932
Recreation, Arts, Entertainment	21	15,425	3,227	287
Accommodation & Food Services	130	90,512	25,024	2,615
Other Services ¹¹	136	49,669	15,813	786

Source: U.S. Census

¹¹ This sector includes all other services except public administration.

Manufacturing was the largest employment sector in Wilson County in 2002 with nearly 9,000 employees in 95 different establishments. In addition, manufacturing has the largest payrolls and the largest number of sales, shipping and receipts than any other employment sector. The next largest employment sectors is retail trade, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services, each with over 2,000 employees in the sector. Table 7.8, below, provides more detail about the employment rates at local industrial (manufacturing) establishments.

V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

Transportation, labor force, available properties, and quality of life are primary factors in the recruiting and retaining of industries. The following table shows the largest industrial employers in Wilson County. Of particular note is the date in which many of these industries were established.

Table 7.8
Major Employers

Employer	Employees	Year Established
Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc.	2,200	1974
Alliance One Tobacco USA	700 (peak)	1928
Kidde Aerospace & Defense	580	1982
Smithfield Packing Co.	500	1996
Cox Target Media	450	1968
Merck Manufacturing Division	360	1982
Bruce Foods Co.	350 (full and part)	1929
Saint Gobain Containers	325	1978
Sandoz	316	1995
Voith Paper Fabrics	225	1970

Source: Wilson Economic Development Council, Manufacturing Directory

Table 7.9
Occupation by Industry Type

Industry	1990	2000	2005	% Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Mining	1,320	857	1,335	1.2
Construction	2,215	2,848	2,449	10.6
Manufacturing	8,335	7,971	5,452	-34.6
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	1,513	1,257	1,230	-18.7
Wholesale Trade	1,370	1,177	2,256	64.7
Retail Trade	5,285	3,841	3,887	-26.4
Finance, insurance, and real estate	1,802	2,008	1,754	0.4
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Service	1,130	1,773	1,736	53.6
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services	971	2,159	3,125	221.8
Educational, Health, and Social Services	5,045	6,518	7,929	57.2
Other Professional and Related Services	1,269	1,492	1,490	17.4
Public Administration	913	1,198	1,566	71.5
Information	n/a	409	524	28.1

Source: U.S. Census

The tables above illustrate the industries that provide the most opportunities for jobs in Wilson County. Of the major industrial employers, shown in Table 7.8, seven were

established prior to 1980. These industrial employers have been in Wilson County for a long time and should be considered to be stable employment opportunities. Bridgestone/Firestone is the largest industrial employer with over 2,000 employees.

The Census provides information (listed in Table 7.9) about occupation by industry categories in Wilson County. With over 7,000 employees in 2005, educational, health and social services have the most employees, followed by manufacturing and retail trade. This differs slightly from the economic sectors in Table 7.7 due to the classification organization by NAICS codes.

Through the investigation in this Chapter, it is agreeable that educational, health and social services, manufacturing and retail trade are the largest employers in Wilson County. Future economic development projects in the targeted areas of life sciences/pharmaceuticals, automotive, building products, foods, and defense/security will be successful if the proper location can be identified. Additionally, training for current residents of Wilson County should be encouraged to match the needs of existing and new companies to address the high unemployment rates.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal(s):

- Encourage compatible development between industrial and commercial growth by focusing on selected locations with high development potential that minimize impact on surrounding population
- Encourage the development of agri-tourism opportunities and green economic development

Strategies:

- Provide a clear review process of future industrial and commercial locations to determine the potential impacts and compatibility of the intensity of the new use on any adjacent development, existing or planned to insure the existing and future uses of the land will be compatible.
 - Each potential use should be evaluated on the merits of the use and industry that may be heavy water users may be appropriate in some locations
 - Partner closely with municipalities regarding future economic development opportunities, incentives (i.e.: utilities), and industrial site location
- Support the goals and objectives of the EDC while keeping in-step with the environmental and land use compatibility issues related to keeping a healthy and growing environment for all Wilson County residents.
- Support the educational and economic goals of the Wilson 20/20 Vision.
- Encourage agri-business and natural resource related business
- Encourage agri-tourism and other forms of tourism development
- Identify special events to attract tourists to the county and provide activities for county residents
 - Build off of whirligig festival
 - Pursue opportunities for a triathlon at Buckhorn or other location

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
❖
WILSON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

CHAPTER 8 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

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COMMUNITY FACILITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

Community facilities are comprised of a variety of services and physical structures that enhance both the standard of living and quality of life in a community. The availability of public services and transportation systems and their ability to support additional growth serves as a measure to gauge urban development. The Community Facilities element of the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan is used to analyze existing facilities and modes of transportation serving Wilson County so that services and physical facilities can continue to deliver a high standard of living for County residents, while realizing potential increases in population and increased demand for services.

II. COUNTY WATER DISTRIBUTION

Wilson County has a water system that follows major thoroughfares throughout much of the jurisdiction. Sewer disposal is primarily handled by the City of Wilson, as is the electric power supply. Each of the municipalities in the County are relatively self sufficient, and provide major services and utilities within their jurisdictions, and in many cases expand into their ETJ or Urban Services Area¹².

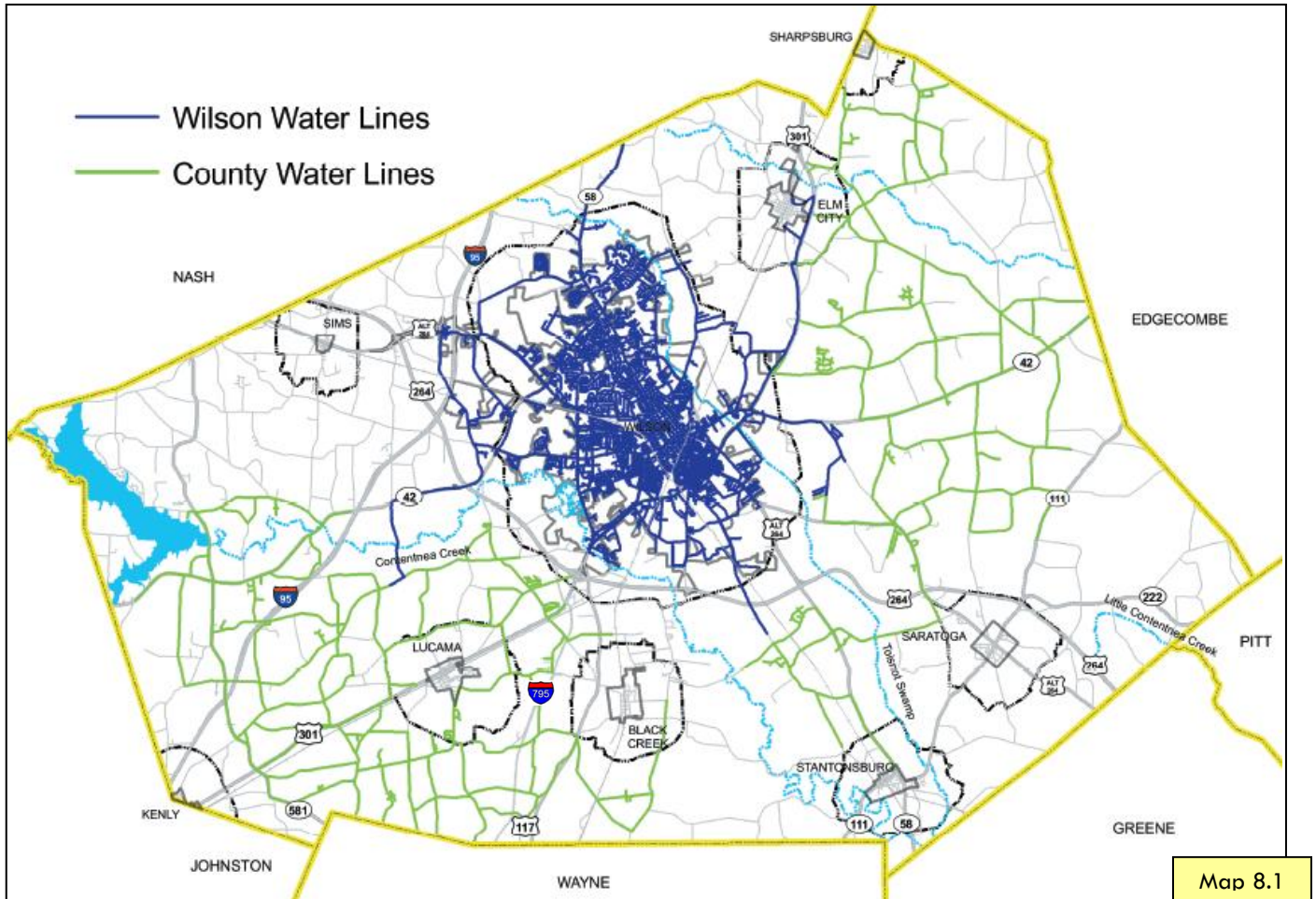
The County began its water system construction in 2000 with a Rural Development Association (RDA) financed program. The program began after hurricane Fran hit eastern North Carolina in September of 1996 and caused extensive well contamination. The situation was exacerbated with the coming of hurricane Floyd in August of 1999. The County has received \$12 million to date. The system has grown from 0 to approximately 2,900 customers in the past six years and in 2006 became profitable for the first time.

The County purchases water from the towns of Black Creek and Stantonsburg, and distributes it through its extensive water line system (see Map 8.1). The towns utilize wells as their water source. The water lines are generally located in the less populated portions of the County. The northeastern and southwestern areas are almost totally served by water. The County is currently pursuing \$750,000 in state money to finish out the system and extend lines into the remaining, un-served portions of the County. Current priorities for expansion include new lines to Elm City because of poor water quality and to the growth areas in the northwestern portions of the County.

This is primarily a residential water system. The system includes six to twelve inch lines, with two inch distribution lines in subdivisions. Water lines are generally extended to subdivisions (upon request) by the County and the developer is responsible for the distribution lines within. Fire hydrants are located along all lines at one per 1,000 feet, with all houses being within 500 feet of a hydrant.

The remainder of the unincorporated area is served by individual wells. The State provides oversight to well drilling. However, in July 2008 the County will be required to take over the oversight of both construction and inspection of individual wells.

¹² Urban Service Area is the area that a municipality may extend utilities within a designated amount of time, typically 10-20 years.



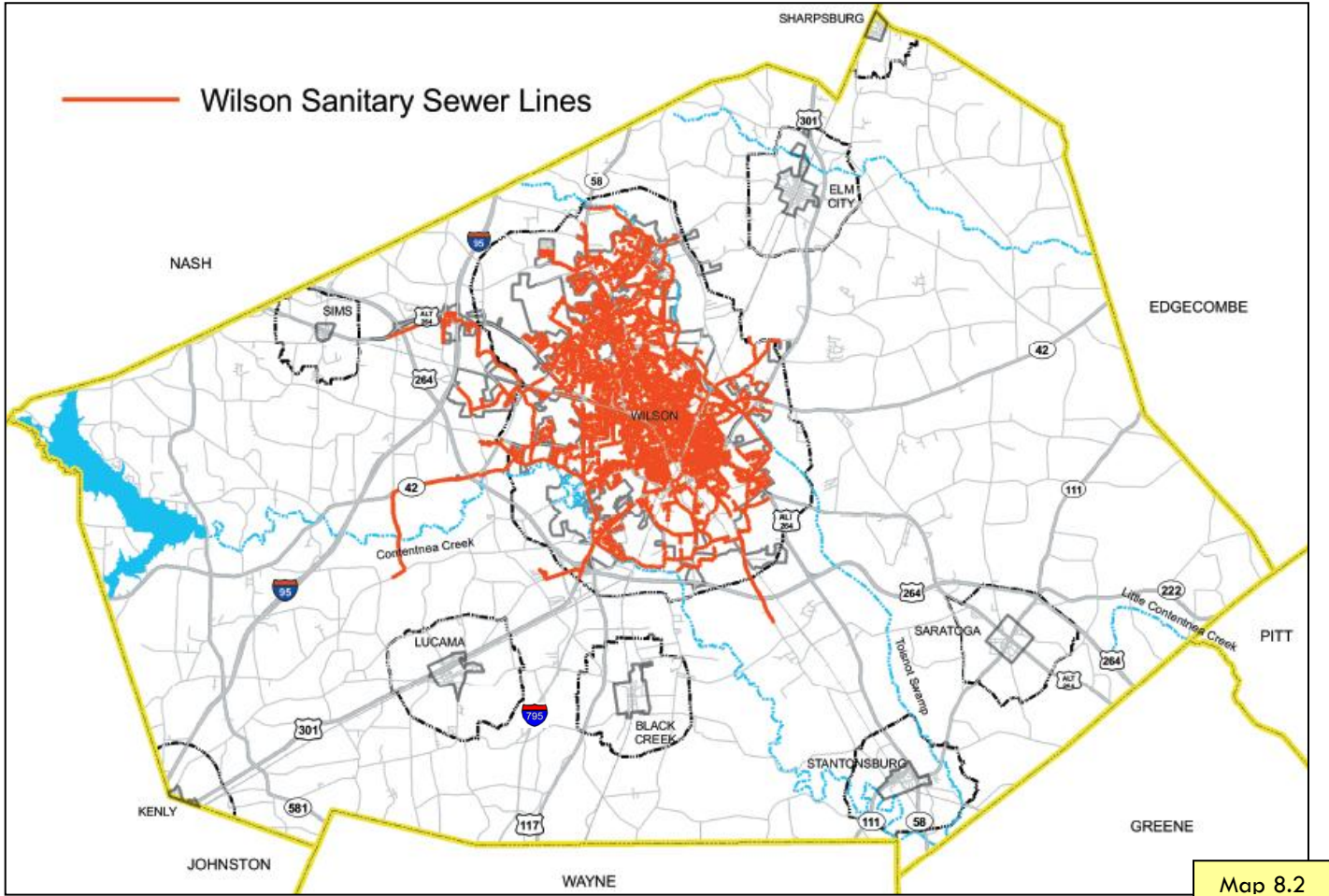
Map 8.1

III. SEWER TREATMENT

The County does not have a sewer treatment system. Other than some limited areas that have connections to one of the municipalities, sewer treatment is totally included within corporate limits and the Urban Service Areas (USA) of the municipalities. For those users that are located in the County that are connected to municipal sewer, double rates generally apply. Map 8.2 shows the municipal sewer lines in Wilson County.

The County primarily relies on individual septic tanks to handle sewer disposal. The County Health Department is tasked with designing and inspecting each system. This department relies on state guidelines and regulations to deal with these systems, because there are no county-mandated rules when it comes to on-site disposal.

The Health Department inspects and issues permits for all septic tanks. A representative of the department must work with the site, and generally has to deal with relatively bad soils. It is possible, although uncommon, for a site to be turned down for a permit. If that happens, generally the landowner must redesign their site, buy additional property, or appeal the decision of the department. Innovative systems are available; however cost can be an issue.



IV. TRANSPORTATION

The purpose of closely reviewing the transportation systems is to compare Wilson County's transportation policies to regional transportation plans, identify highways within the County that are reaching capacity or are scheduled to be improved, and to incorporate state and regional plans with the Wilson County Comprehensive Plan.

Transportation includes more than just roads. The entire transportation infrastructure in Wilson County includes roads and highways, railroads, the airport, and transportation services. The system works to move people, materials, and products in various ways. The primary users are individuals in automobiles, however if one portion of the entire system is deteriorating, or is absent altogether, it has effects upon commuting, the transfer of goods, and economic development as a whole. Map 8.4 at the end of the transportation section displays the transportation system for Wilson County.

A. ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Wilson County has an extensive road system that includes four federal highways, including two interstates, and five state highways. These highways provide connections within Wilson County and between the County and other population centers.

Interstate 95 traverses the western portion of the County. This highway runs along the eastern seaboard and carries an average of 34,000 vehicles per day in Wilson County (north of US 264 interchange) and 31,000 to the south of US 264 interchange. Typical interstate development generally is found at major interchanges along this highway. As of yet, Wilson County has not seen a great deal of development at the existing interchanges at 117, 111, or 222.

**Table 8.1
Roads and Highways**

Highway	Classification	Major Destinations
Interstate 95	Federal	Miami, New York, Fayetteville
Interstate 795	Federal	Goldsboro and I-95
US 301	Federal	Smithfield, Rocky Mount
US 117	Federal	Goldsboro, Wilmington
US 264	Federal	Raleigh, Greenville
NC 42	State	Fuquay-Varina, Sanford
NC 581	State	Goldsboro
NC 111	State	Tarboro, Goldsboro
NC 58	State	Kinston
NC 222	State	Greenville

Source: NCDOT

Wilson County does not have an NCDOT Transportation Plan. NCDOT is currently in the process of developing a study; however turnover has caused the project to stall. The transportation planning process is meant to help the County identify future transportation needs of all types and to prepare for recommendations to be included in the State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is NCDOT's plan for future road improvements.

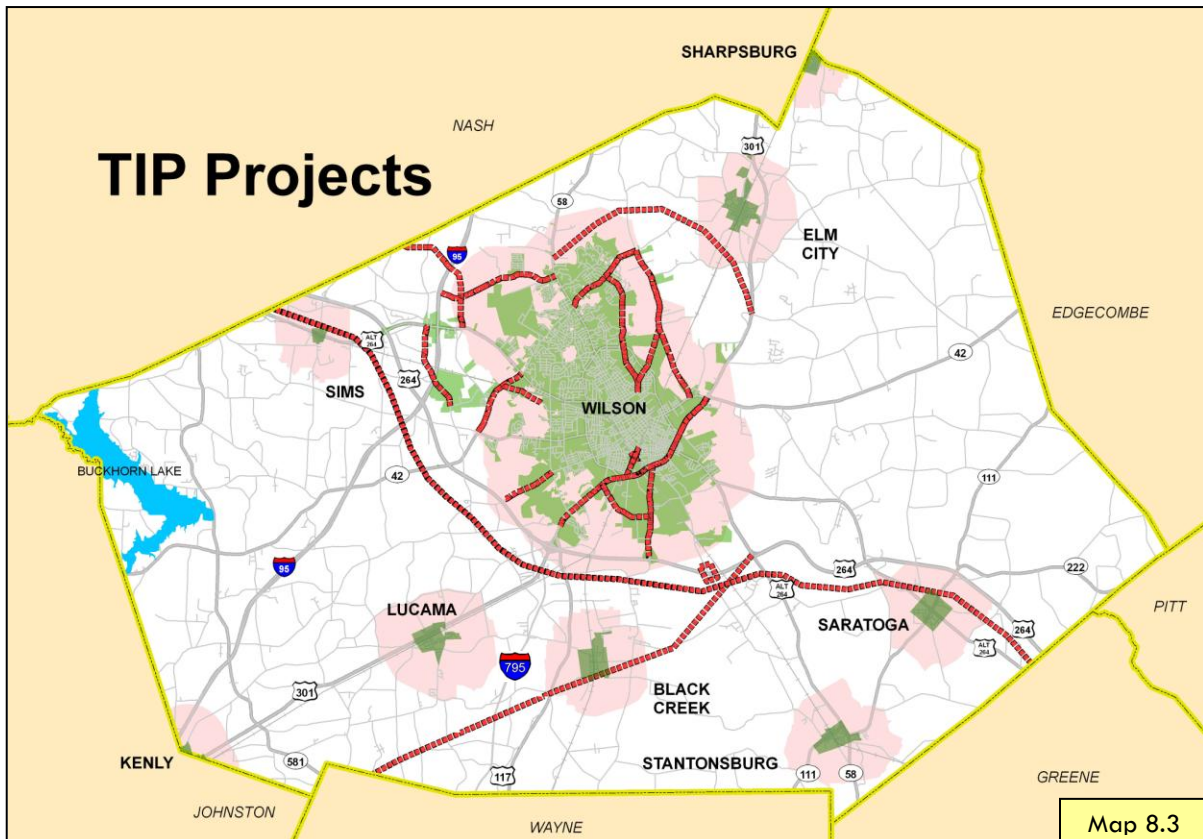
Wilson County is part of the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Transportation Planning Organization (RPO), which includes Edgecombe, Johnston, and Nash Counties. This RPO program was developed by NCDOT to ensure that rural counties plan comprehensively for their transportation needs. The Upper Coastal Plain RPO is administered by the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments. Wilson County has a limited number of projects included in the TIP, with most of those projects being bridge replacements. The following table shows projects that have been submitted to the Upper Coastal Plain RPO for inclusion in the 2009-2015 TIP. These projects are in order of prioritization. Those with a number shown under the TIP column are already included in the TIP. Map 8.3 below shows the TIP projects and their locations around Wilson County.

**Table 8.2
Transportation Improvement Projects**

Route	TIP	Description
Airport Boulevard	U-3823	Complete road from US 264 Alt. to NC 42
US 301	New	New facility from Wiggins Mill to NC 42
Black Creek Road	U-3471	Widen road from US 301 to US 264 Bypass
Wilco Boulevard	New	Widen Wilco Blvd. from US 301 to Black Creek Road
Lamm Road	FS-0204E	Widen road from Industrial Park to US264

		Alt
London Church road	New	Widen London Church Rd from Herring to Lake Wilson
Corbett Avenue	New	Widen road from Raleigh Rd Pkwy to Lake Wilson Rd
NC 58 to US 301	U-3470	Multi-laned facility from NC 58 to US 301/Rosebud
Downing Street	New	Widen road from Forest Hills to US264 Bypass
Packhouse Road and Bloomery Road	New	Widen roads from NC 58 to US 264 Alt
Westwood Avenue	New	New facility connecting Airport Blvd and Airport Rd
Signal System	New	Construct closed loop signal system within City.
NC 58	R-3102	Multi-laned facility from US 264 Bypass to US 70
Interchange at US 264 Bypass and Stantonsburg Rd	R-4737	1/2 cloverleaf interchange at Stantonsburg Rd
Lake Wilson Road	New	Connect Lake Wilson Rd to London Church Rd
Rail Canopy Restoration	New	Restore existing canopy at Wilson Rail depot
Commuter Rail	New	Construct commuter rail from Wilson to Raleigh

Source: Upper Coastal Plain RPO



B. RAILROADS

There are two railroads in Wilson County, CSX and Carolina Coastal Railway. Both bisect the County and do not have major facilities other than the lines. Rail is an important factor in economic development and is an efficient alternative to over the road transport. Other than the benefit of transporting high quantities of product, rail has some major environmental advantages.

According to CSX, every railcar trip removes approximately three truck trips from our highways. Railroads can move one ton of freight three times as far as a truck on a gallon of fuel, and that same one ton load will only emit one-tenth the hydrocarbons and diesel particulates of trucks, and one-third the oxides of nitrogen and carbon.

Typically, a rail company considers many factors when examining the possibility of expanding its service through spur lines to new industrial users. Issues such as location, shipping volume, frequency of shipping, and others factor greatly into whether a spur line will be granted. Generally speaking, an industry must use at least 25 cars per year to make the situation feasible. A switch would be required to access the site, which requires a maintenance fee to operate.

When considering how far a spur line will go, the same type of analysis takes place. However, another major factor is the number of times local infrastructure would be crossed. Extensions of over ten miles have been made, however if there are major obstacles in the way, that would likely not be the case.

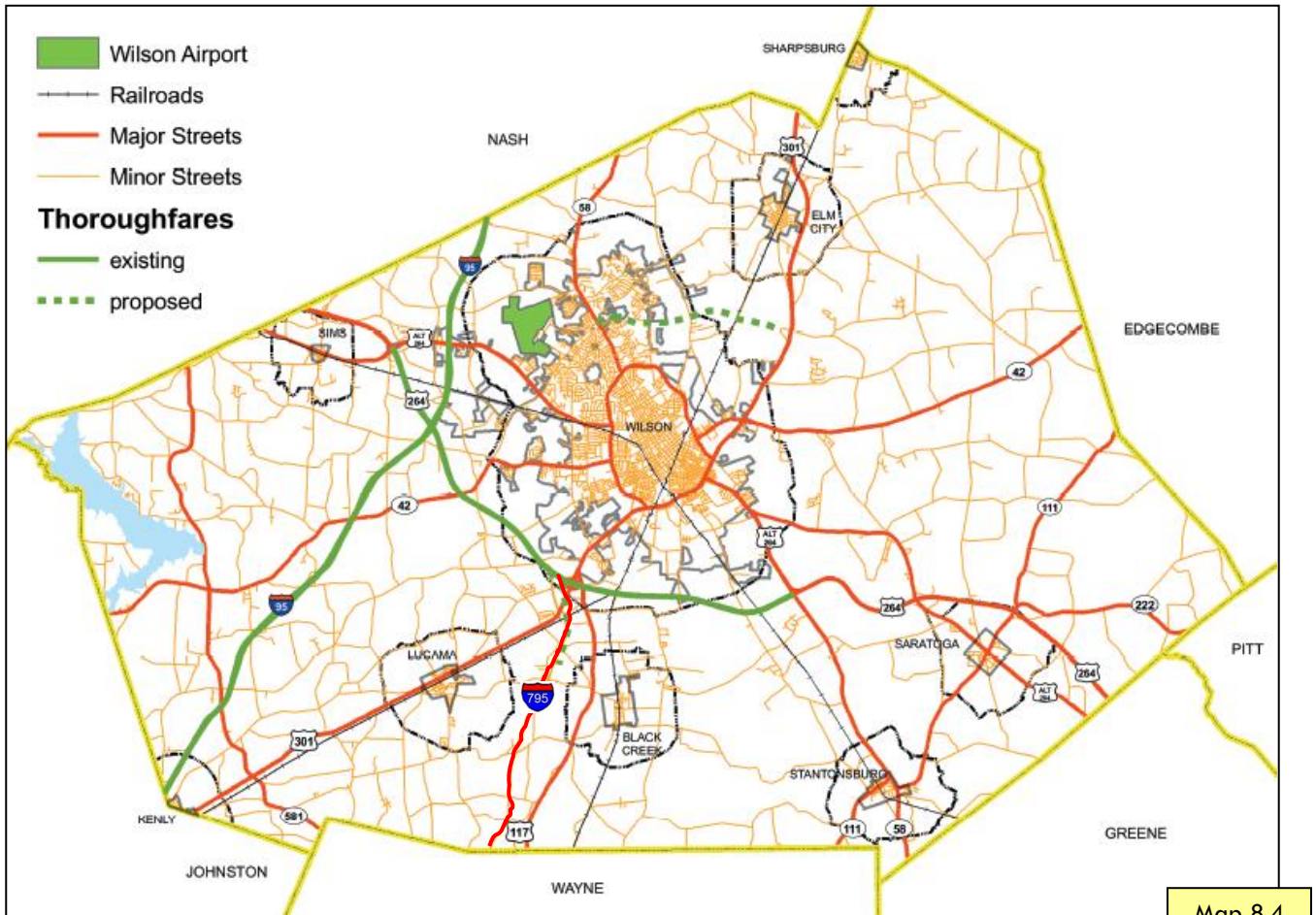
C. AIRPORTS

There is no passenger airport in Wilson County. However, the Wilson Industrial Air Center is located in the western portion of the City of Wilson and is a major incentive for economic development. The airport is located five miles from I-95 and provides onsite industrial lots with taxi-way access available. The Air Center has three 4,500 foot runways, one of which is lighted, and is zoned light industrial. Rocky Mount-Wilson Airport (RWI) which serves the Counties of Nash, Wilson and Edgecombe with regional air service is located nearby on NC Highway 97. RWI is just 6.5 miles from Rocky Mount, 9 miles from Wilson and only minutes from industrial traffic routes I-95, US 64, 264, 301 and NC 98.

D. TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

Wilson County provides public transportation as a branch of county government. This service has been provided since 1988 and offers transportation 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The County contracts with MV Transit and includes a fleet of 14 vehicles, including seven modified vans equipped to accommodate the elderly and/or handicapped, six standard vans, and one minivan.

This service is offered to the general public residing or having destinations at least ¼ of a mile outside of the city bus route. The trip price is a minimum of \$2.00 per one way trip. Trip fees are not required for the elderly and/or handicapped.



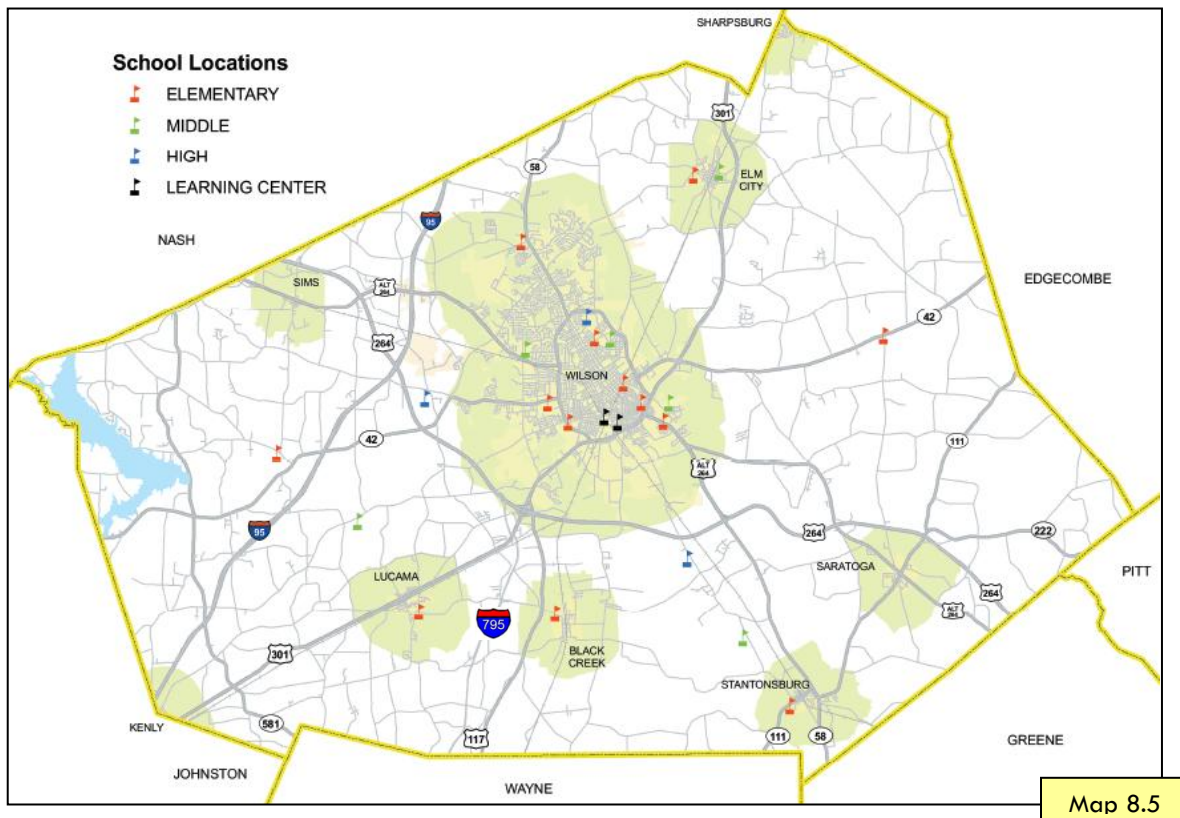
Map 8.4

V. SCHOOLS

The Wilson County school system consists of 24 institutions: 13 elementary schools, six middle schools, three high schools, and two learning centers (one pre-k learning center and one alternative school). Due to the schools nearing capacity a new 800-student elementary school is being constructed to service the fast growing northwestern portion of the County (Highway 42/Airport Blvd). The school system is expecting to need a new middle school (potentially at this same site) by 2012. The school system is currently growing by at least 200 students per year. Map 8.5 below shows the locations of the public schools within the Wilson County school system.

Growth in Wilson County has caused some stress on the school system. Busing students to and from school has become difficult, as some students are now taking longer bus rides, and buses are beginning to take double loads (two trips each) to effectively transport students. Additionally, there is a statewide shortage of teachers in North Carolina. According to the Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, the State of North Carolina is currently producing only 3,000 teachers a year, while the demand for teachers is 10,000 annually. North Carolina, as well as Wilson County, is currently experiencing high drop-out rates each year.

The Wilson County school system has recently instituted a high school reform where students select “concentrations” much as they would for a college major. As the program has just been implemented the following concentrations are currently available: arts, health sciences, construction technology. This reform was done in conjunction with the colleges (Barton College and Wilson Community College) in Wilson County. It is intended that this program will eventually work to consider the needs of Wilson County in aid to train students to fill jobs in the area.



Map 8.5

While private schools in Wilson do not receive public funding, and are not included in considerations for capital improvements, it is important to mention them because if they were not functioning, those students they service would by default be part of the public school system.

Currently, there are five major private educational institutions in Wilson County. These schools are (in no particular order): W.E. Garnett Christian Academy, Community Christian School, Greenfield School, St Therese Catholic School, and Wilson Christian Academy. The total enrollment for these schools is approximately 1,100 students. The private schools offer enrollment for grades pre-kindergarten through the 12th grade, with the exception of W.E. Garnett Christian Academy which only enrolls students from 1st grade through 12th grade and St. Therese Catholic School that is Pre-School through 5th grade.

Wilson County is also the home of two colleges: Barton College, a small private liberal arts institution and Wilson Community College (WCC), a local public community college. Barton College, home to the 2007 NCAA Division II National Champions, has a current

enrollment of approximately 1,200 students, many of which live on campus in downtown Wilson. Wilson Community College is located on Herring Avenue in the City of Wilson. WCC provides an affordable education in a variety of degrees and subjects, including non-degree granting programs, adult continuing education, GED's, and associates degrees in many professions.

Both WCC and Barton College help to improve the quality of life within Wilson County; whether it is through the provision of activities such as athletic games or theater productions, the colleges in Wilson provide an invaluable service to the area. Additionally, the colleges are active in promoting continuing education for adults and alternative education for local students. Additionally, colleges bring people to Wilson County as students, staff, professors, and associated service industries workers. Public input indicated that it is not a rare occurrence for people to come to Wilson to attend college and locate there permanently after they complete their degree.

VI. PARKS AND RECREATION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this element of the Comprehensive Plan is to outline Wilson County sites with historic, architectural, or cultural significance in order to document the cultural resources that add to the quality of life for residents. The resources identified in the section should be targeted for preservation so that their presence and significance can be enjoyed and appreciated by future generations.

B. PREVIOUS PARKS & RECREATION PLANNING EFFORTS IN WILSON COUNTY

The Wilson Parks and Recreation Master Plan was completed in 1993, through a joint effort by the City of Wilson and Wilson County. This plan relied heavily upon information provided in the Wilson Growth Plan (1990) and the Park and Recreation Study for Wilson (1965).

The “unifying principles” that came out of the 1993 plan include the following:

1. Keep existing facilities well-maintained.
2. Use existing facilities to the fullest, in terms of both space and time.
3. While emphasizing programs which serve unmet recreation needs of the greatest number of people, continue to meet the needs of special populations.
4. Continue to work closely with the school system, Barton College, community associations, and other recreation service providers, making dual use of facilities, and sponsoring joint programs wherever possible.
5. Actively seek donations of land, emphasizing the tax benefits and positive legacy that such donations can bring to corporations and families.
6. Develop a greenway system, capitalizing on the many stream ways and utility corridors with which the Wilson area is benefited.
7. Encourage public and/or private cooperation in building and maintaining appropriate recreation facilities, particularly at the neighborhood and small area level.
8. Plan ahead for major recreation facilities. Continue to integrate parks and recreation planning into a five-year (plus) capital improvement plan (CIP).
9. Incorporate cultural, aesthetic and environmental influences into the planning for parks and recreation facilities and programs.

10. Encourage on-going public input into the shaping of parks and recreation services.

Additionally, the 1993 Master Plan recommends the following:

1. Give first priority to improving existing parks.
2. Provide a new county-wide park.
3. Provide two community parks to the north and west of the City of Wilson.
4. Encourage private sector neighborhood parks, and provide two neighborhood parks where the private sector will likely not provide them.
5. Provide senior recreational programming in a new Senior Center.
6. Develop a greenway system in the Wilson urban area by the year 2000.
7. Develop a regional park at Buckhorn Reservoir
8. Provide township parks in each of the County's townships.

C. INVENTORY OF PARKS & RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The following is an inventory of parks and recreational opportunities that are currently provided in Wilson County today.

1. Lakes & Reservoirs

a. Buckhorn Reservoir

Buckhorn Reservoir is located off of Highway 581 on State Road 1142. It has 850 acres of water designate for recreational use and 350 acres of land with a variety of sporting events including skiing, boating, fishing, personal water craft launching, picnicking, and camping. Boat permits and restrooms are also available at the reservoir.

b. Lake Wilson

Lake Wilson is located on Lake Wilson Road. It has 90 acres of water and 37 acres of land with boating, fishing, picnicking, camping, and hiking.

c. Toisnot Reservoir

Toisnot Reservoir is located on Lawndale Drive off of Ward Boulevard. It has 20 acres of water and 64.2 acres of land with fishing, picnicking, a playground, three nature trails, a fitness trail, and softball fields.

d. Wiggins Mill Reservoir

Wiggins Mill Reservoir is located on Highway 301 South. It has 285 acres of water and 285 acres of land with boating and fishing.

2. Parks

There are 25 parks in Wilson County. Most of them are located within the City of Wilson.

- a. Belle Meade Park-3000 Airport Road
- b. Carolina Street Park-Carolina Street
- c. Cavalier Terrace-Branch Street
- d. Church Street Park-Church and Pender Street
- e. East Street Park-East Street
- f. Elvie Street Park-Sauls and Pickett Street
- g. Freeman Park-Freeman and Finch Street

- h. Gold Park-Raleigh and North Roundtree Street
- i. Green Street Park-400 Block Northeast Green Street
- j. Lamm Park-Statonsburg Road
- k. Lane Street Park-Liberty Lawn and West Nash Street
- l. Linear Park-Viola Street and Pender Street
- m. Matthis Park-Forest Hills Road
- n. Merrimont Park-2500 West Buckingham Drive
- o. Norris Park-Norris Boulevard
- p. Pender Street Park-Pender Street
- q. Wilson Recreation Park-Raleigh Road
- r. Reid Street Park-Reid Street
- s. Ridgewood Park-Phillips Street
- t. Toisnot Park-Corbett Avenue and Lawndale Drive
- u. Warren Street Park-Warren Street
- v. Weaver-Bailey Park-Adventura Lane and Highway 264 East
- w. Westwood Park-Woodcroft Drive
- x. Williams Day Camp-Mount Vernon Drive
- y. Woodard Park-Canal Street

3. Greenways

- a. Contentnea Creek Greenway

4. Golf Facilities

- a. Wilson Golf Range

Located at 1905 Downing Street, Wilson Golf Range provides a golf driving range.

- b. Happy Valley Country Club

Located off of Highway 264 East, Happy Valley Country Club provides an 18-hole golf course, driving range, putting green, picnic shelter, three lakes, swimming pool, snack bar, and pro shop.

- c. Wedgewood Public Golf Course

Located on Old Stantonburg Road, Wedgewood Public Golf Course provides an 18-hole golf course, two putting greens, two driving ranges, playground, four lakes, a picnic shelter, snack bar, and pro shop.

- d. Willow Springs Country Club and Golf Course

Located at 3033 Highway 301 South, Willow Springs provides an 18-hole golf course, putting green, driving range, swimming pool, snack bar, and pro shop.

- e. Wilson Country Club (private)

Located at 4509 Country Club Drive, Wilson Country Club provides an 18-hole golf course, putting green, driving range, lakes, restaurant, and pro shop.

5. Tennis Facilities

- a. Lake Wilson Tennis Club

Located at 4738 Lake Wilson Road, provides a 6 clay court facility with club house, pro shop and snack bar.

- b. Wilson Country Club (private)
Located at 4509 Country Club Drive, Wilson County Club provides 6 clay courts, 3 hard courts, pro shop and restaurant.

6. Sports Activities

- a. County Line Raceway
County Line Raceway offers racing on a quarter-mile dirt track.
- b. Southern National Speedway
Located at 8071 Newsome Mill Road in Lucama, the Southern National Speedway has auto racing for over 4,000 spectators.
- c. Wilson Tobs Baseball
The Wilson Tobs are a Coastal Plain All Star AA Baseball Team playing over 24 home games each year at Fleming Stadium located at 300 Stadium Street. The stadium seats 4,000 people and is located across the street from the North Carolina Baseball museum.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal:

Provide access to and encourage the development and provision of adequate community facilities for all Wilson County residents.

Strategies:

- Develop a Technical Review Committee (TRC as described under intergovernmental coordination)
 - Partner closely with all public Agencies and Departments in review of future plans for facilities and the location and accessibility to the residents of Wilson County (EMS, Schools, etc.)
- Update the existing parks and recreation study to determine where future recreational facilities may be needed
 - New growth areas need to be examined for adequate park facilities
 - Consider potential locations for new recreational opportunities to include:
 - Low impact recreational opportunities
 - Create “dog” parks with access to dense population
 - Opportunities for parks to be a draw for tourism and sports activities
 - Develop a comprehensive county-wide Greenway plan as part of the study
 - Identify areas for horse trails, biking, walking, nature trails, and canoe/kayak trails
 - Contentnea Creek possible location for a paddle trail
 - Market areas to larger urban areas, within the region and state
 - Pursue partnerships with municipalities within the county to ensure adequate recreation throughout county

- Consider reservation of recreational areas and/or fees in lieu to provide recreational opportunities for a growing population as new subdivisions are developed
 - Encourage open space in new subdivision

CHAPTER 9 ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES

I. INTRODUCTION

Wilson County is located on the border of the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain of North Carolina. The land area is 374 square miles. As with many eastern NC counties, there is an abundance of floodplain and swampland. It is generally level, with a few rolling hills located in the northwestern portion. Soils are designated as "prime" for farming, as evidenced by its rich tobacco history. Wilson County has a moderate climate, with a monthly mean temperature of 60.1 degrees Fahrenheit. Average annual rainfall is approximately 47 inches.

Major components of the quality of life in a community are the places where people live, work and play. Future population growth within Wilson County should not mean the unnecessary loss of landscape resources or a decline in environmental quality. The effects of rapid population expansion can leave undesirable, irreversible effects on the landscape if protection of natural resources does not take place. New development in forms of homes, businesses, schools and roads that are necessary to serve a growing population can occur without threatening the County's environmental quality.

II. NATRUAL RESOURCES IN WILSON COUNTY

The purpose of this element of the Comprehensive Plan is to emphasize the importance of Wilson County's environment as it aims to maintain a high quality of life. In the attempt to preserve, enrich and promote natural and rural areas, this goal will be accomplished through coordination with other elements of this Plan. This element investigates six categories of natural resources including: hydrology, watersheds and water supply, topography, soils, agriculture, and animal habitat. Each of these categories are examined in detail to inventory the current environmental restraints that exist within the County.

A. HYDROLOGY

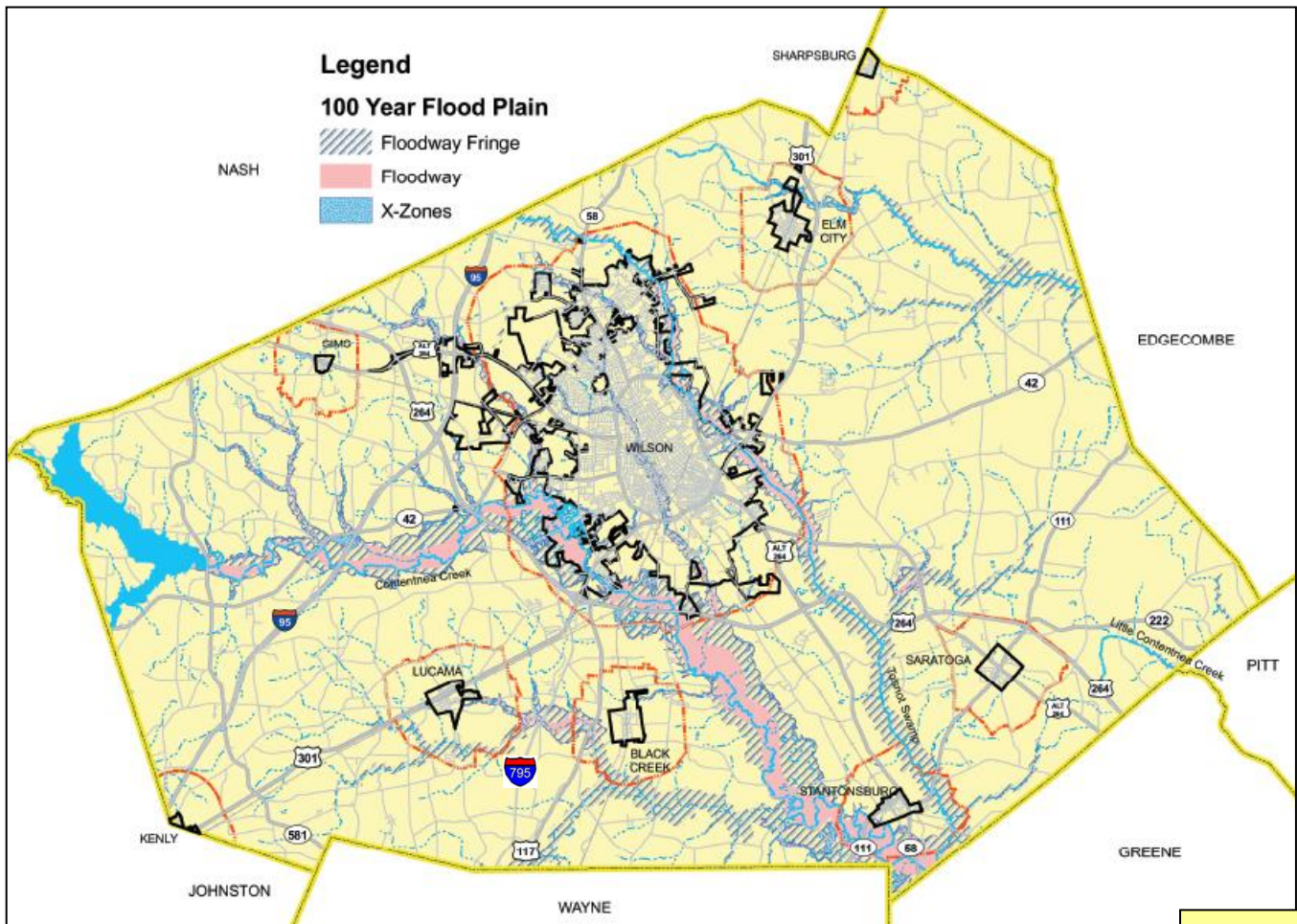
Wilson County is located in the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico River Basins. At 6,200 square miles, the Neuse River Basin is the third largest of the states river basins. It includes 23 counties and 78 municipalities. Wilson County primarily falls within this basin. The Tar-Pamlico Basin is the fourth largest in the state, with approximately 5,500 square miles. Only the extreme northeastern portion of the County is located in the Tar-Pamlico. The basin includes 19 counties and 53 municipalities.

There are several major waterways, water bodies, and swamps in Wilson County. Map 9.1 shows the locations of the hydrology within Wilson County and the areas that are deemed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as Flood Hazard Areas. Most of these have areas susceptible to flooding. Almost 28,000 acres of the land within the county is located within flood hazard areas. The following table (Table 9.1) shows the areas susceptible to flooding, as well as the amount of land located in each respective floodplain. As demonstrated by the table, there is a considerable amount of land in Wilson County that is located within a flood hazard area. Wilson County currently has a "Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance" to help control and regulate development within these areas.

Table 9.1
Areas Susceptible to Flooding by Drainage

Basin	100 yr. Floodplain	500 yr. Floodplain	Total
Black Creek	2,360	130	2,490
Bloomery Swamp	812	114	926
Cattail Swamp	951	0	951
Contentnea Creek	13,229	1,616	14,845
Goss Swamp	209	0	209
Hominy Swamp	30	0	30
Marsh Swamp	329	107	436
Moccasin Creek	1,157	0	1,157
Toisnot Swamp	4,807	299	5,106
Town Creek	428	0	428
White Swamp	184	30	214
White Oak Swamp	915	30	945
Total	25,411	2,326	27,737

Source: Wilson County GIS Data



Contentnea Creek has by far the largest area subject to flooding. The creek itself is the longest in the County and begins at the Buckhorn Reservoir. The area susceptible

to flooding along this creek, as well as Moccasin Creek, and Bloomery and Marsh Swamps is important because they are all located in the fastest growing part of the County. The significant amount of floodplain will not deter growth, however higher standards are required when building in the floodplain.

Buckhorn Reservoir is located in the northwestern corner of the County. It is an 850 acre lake that provides water to the City of Wilson. The reservoir is also surrounded by 350 acres of land which is managed by the City. Recreational activities at the reservoir include boating, water skiing, fishing, personal water crafts, picnicking, and camping. Because the reservoir is the water supply for Wilson, it has a protected watershed. Rules designated for this watershed govern the allowable density of new construction.

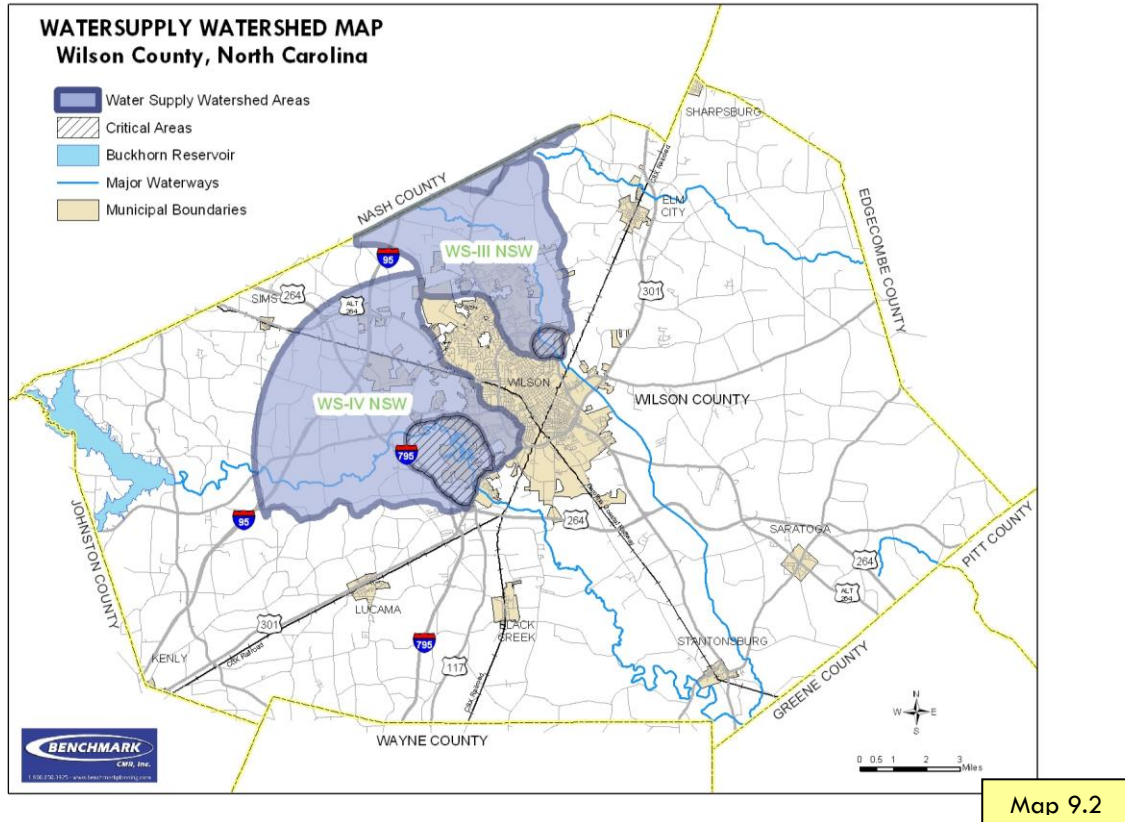
Lake Wilson is located on Lake Wilson Road in the northern section of the County. It is 90 acres, with 37 acres of land. Activities include boating, fishing, picnicking, camping, and hiking. The Toisnot Reservoir is found inside the City of Wilson off on Lawndale Drive. It is the smallest lake in the County at 20 acres, and has 64 acres of land. Activities include fishing, picnicking, a playground, nature and fitness trails, and softball fields. Wiggins Mill Reservoir is a relatively large lake found on US 301 South. It is 285 acres in area and is surrounded by 130 acres of land. Wiggins Mill offers boating, fishing, and boat rentals.

B. WATERSHEDS AND WATER QUALITY

There are three water supply watersheds in Wilson County, the Toisnot Watershed, class III protected, Contentnea Creek Watershed, class IV critical, Contentnea Creek Watershed, class IV protected, and the Buckhorn Reservoir Watershed. Watersheds have been mandated by the State to protect the local water supplies by limiting impervious surface coverage through density limitations. The County administers this program through its local “*Wilson County Watershed Management and Protection Ordinance*”. Map 9.2 demonstrates the water supply watersheds located within Wilson County.

The Toisnot Watershed is located in the area immediately north of the City of Wilson. It is a protected watershed that maintains a low to moderate intensity land use pattern. Much of this watershed is located within the City. In fact, the entire critical area is found within the corporate limits of the City of Wilson. The County’s Watershed Protection Ordinance only addresses the protected portion of this watershed. The Contentnea Creek (Neuse) Watershed is found west of Wilson. It has a large area that spans beyond I-95. It is broken into critical and protected areas. The development constraints in the critical area are similar to those in the protected areas, except that lots zoned AR (Agricultural-Residential) must be at least one acre in size.

The Buckhorn Reservoir, which provides public water to the City of Wilson, is located in the western-most portion of the County. Owned and maintained by the City, the reservoir consists of 850 acres of water and 350 acres of land. The reservoir and the surrounding lands are located within the Contentnea Creek Watershed, and are protected by regulations in the Watershed Ordinance.



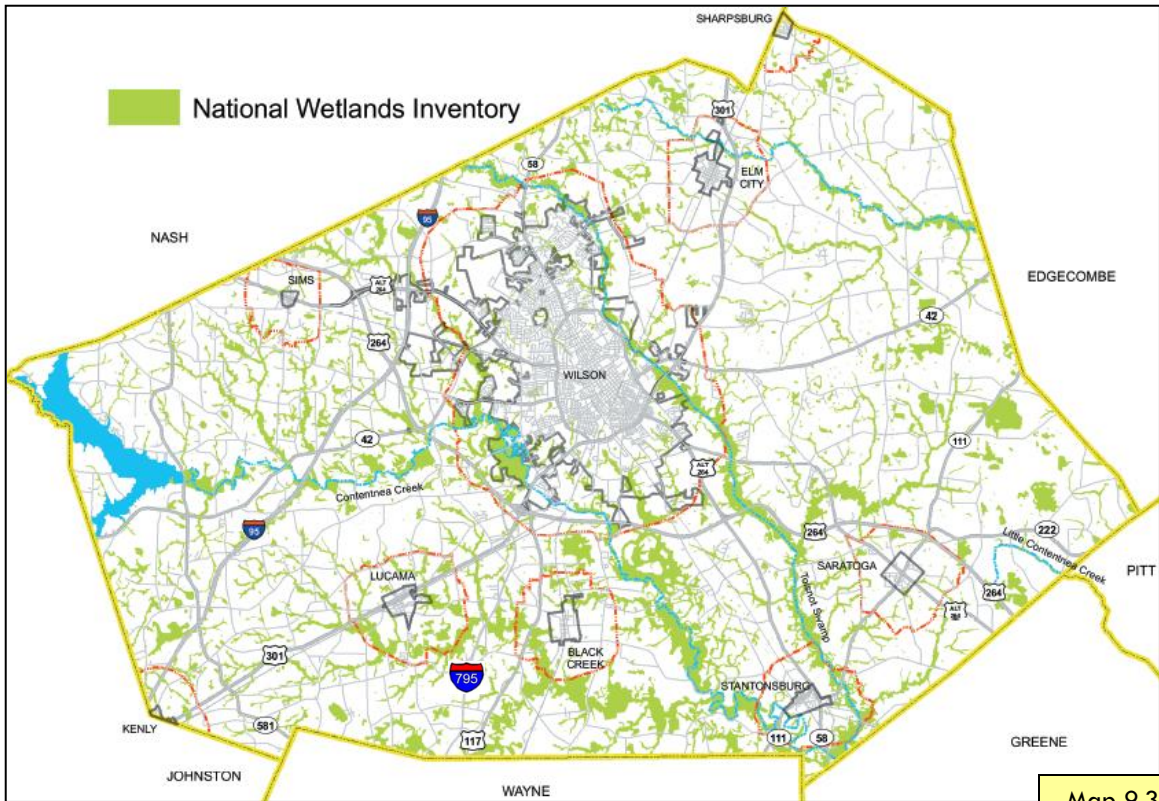
Map 9.2

C. WETLANDS

The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) defines wetlands as, “lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. For purposes of this classification wetlands must have one or more of the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes; (2) the substrate is predominantly un-drained hydric soil; and (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of the year.”

Wetlands in Wilson County generally follow the major hydrology in Wilson County, and are most predominant in the central portion of the County. Overall the County has 4,418 acres of various wetlands, as classified by the National Wetlands Inventory. Map 9.3 below shows the locations of the wetlands throughout Wilson County.

It is important to track and maintain wetlands because they are often home to many plant and animal species. According to the NWI, a recent analysis suggests that 50 percent of North American bird species depend on wetlands across the Country. Currently, any development that would affect or alter a wetland requires a permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers that would approve the wetland fill. Subdivisions and other major developments must clearly delineate the wetlands that are on the property. As previously mentioned, in Wilson County the largest wetlands are generally clustered along major hydrology, within areas that are deemed flood hazard areas, and within water supply watersheds providing additional regulations, and making these areas often difficult to develop.



D. TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS

Wilson County is located slightly over 100 miles from the coastline of the Atlantic Ocean. Wilson has generally flat topography covering the entire County. The highest elevation of the County is 305 feet above sea level, in the northwestern corner of the County, with the lowest elevation at 50 feet above sea level in the southeastern portion of the County. The even topography of the land in Wilson County is supportive of the agricultural uses that played such a large role in the County's history. Slope contours and soils for Wilson County are shown in Map 9.4 on the following page.

The soils in Wilson County are prime lands for agriculture, as evidenced by its rich tobacco history. There are 34 different soil classifications found within Wilson County, however, eight of these classifications make up more than 70 percent of the County. Table 9.2 below shows the eight most common soil types found in Wilson County and descriptions of each of the soil types are provided in the next paragraph.

Norfolk Loamy Sand generally has a slope of 0-6 percent and is generally found in the lower, middle, or upper coastal plains. These soils are well drained and are commonly cleared and used for general crop cultivation. Rains Sandy Loam is poorly drained soil found in the lower, middle, or upper coastal plains. Rains Sandy Loam is commonly used as forest or crop land. Bibb Loam is typically very deep, poorly drained, and moderately permeable soils. They are commonly flooded and water runs off the surface very slowly. Goldsboro Sandy Loams are moderately drained, deep, and permeable soils. They are typically used for cropland, and are particularly well suited for corn, peanuts, tobacco and soybeans. Grantham Very Fine

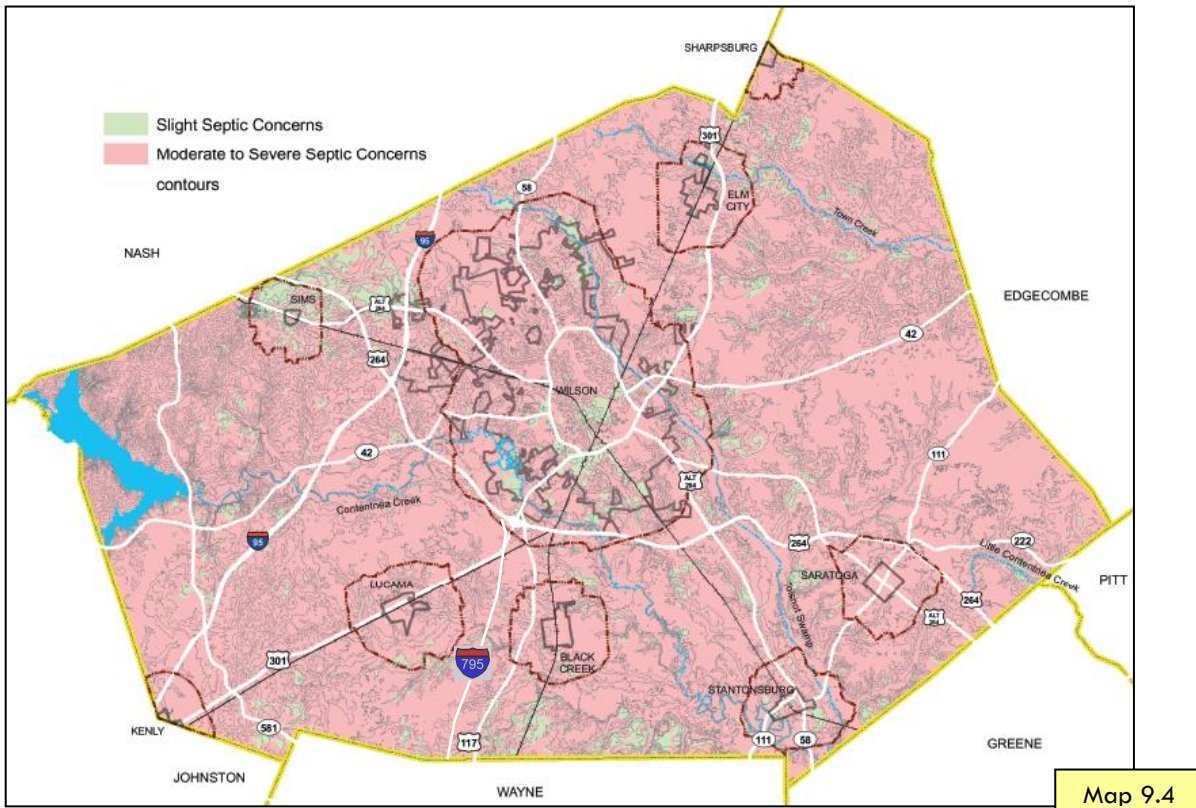
Sandy Loams are very deep, poorly drained soils on uplands of the middle and lower coastal plains. Overall, about 2/3 of this soil classification is forested, the remaining 1/3 has generally been drained and is used for pastureland. Gritney Sandy Loams are very deep and moderately well drained. They are generally used for cropland, pastureland, and forest. Wagram Loamy Sands are most commonly used for cropland; cultivating crops such as tobacco, soybeans, corn, cotton and small grains. This soil is suited very well for agricultural uses. Tomotley Fine Sandy Loams are poorly drained, very deep, and have moderate to moderately slow permeability. These soils are mostly cultivated.

Table 9.2
Common Soils Found in Wilson County

Soil Classification	Abbreviation	Slope	Septic Rating	Percentage of County
Norfolk Loamy Sand	NoA	0-6%	Moderate	21.1
Rains Sandy Loam	Ra	--	Severe	14.5
Bibb Loam	Bb	0-2%	Severe	8.8
Goldsboro Sandy Loam	GoA	--	Severe	7.5
Grantham Very Fine Sandy Loam	GtB2	--	Severe	5.0
Gritney Sandy Loam	Gr	2-5%	Severe	4.5
Wagram Loamy Sand	WaB	0-6%	Slight	4.5
Tomotley Fine Sandy Loam	Tt	--	Severe	4.4

Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service

The soil descriptions can also provide information on how susceptible properties will be to the placement of septic systems. Map 9.4 shows the soil rating across Wilson County for installation of septic systems on private property.



Map 9.4

The descriptions and the septic ratings for soil areas in Wilson County help to point out some interesting conclusions. Eight soil classifications make up over 70 percent of the soil types in Wilson County. Of these soil types six classifications are generally utilized for crop land, while the remaining two are easily flooded and are best suited for natural vegetation. Also obvious from Map 9.3 above, is that much of the County has soils with poor soil ratings for the placement of septic systems. Six of the eight soils that make up 70 percent of Wilson County are classified as severe, one is classified as moderate, and one is classified as slight. This could be a concern for developments depending on septic for sewer disposal (as most properties in Wilson County currently do).

E. AGRICULTURE

In the 1920s, Wilson County was once the World's greatest tobacco market. Today, Agriculture within Wilson County is primarily row crops. Although the tobacco industry as a whole has taken a downward turn over the past 20 years, tobacco farming in Wilson County has remained steady. The change from the quota system to a contract rent system has given local farmers stability and caused them to invest more into tobacco and tobacco-related equipment. Other crops include cotton, sweet potatoes and corn. Livestock is mostly limited to swine and to a lesser extent, cattle.

There is some diversification that is occurring based on past fears of losing the tobacco crops. Increases in produce are a part of that diversification. In addition, corn output is increasing due to an increase in the use of ethanol as an alternative automotive fuel. More than half (56.5 percent) of the farms in Wilson County are between 10 and 179 acres. Nine percent of the farms are smaller than 10 acres and the remaining 35 percent of the farms are 180 acres in size or greater.

As discussed in the soils and topography category in this Chapter, soils throughout the County are generally good for farming. This is also confirmed through a general lack of pastureland. Agricultural lands where the soils are not prime for farming often are used for pastureland.

Overall in NC, the number of farms decreased in 2005 by 1,000, tops in the nation. This number is down from 3,000 in 2004, which was also the Nation's highest¹³. Although data is not available for 2005, the 2002 Census of Agriculture, which is completed every five years, shows that Wilson County experienced a decrease in the number of farms and the amount of land in farms. However, the average farm size has increased. Table 9.3 shows the changes that have occurred in the farming community over the last ten years.

¹³ Source: USDA

Table 9.3
Changes in Agriculture

	1987	1992	1997	2002	% Change ('87-'02)
Farms	666	489	433	315	-52.7
Land in Farms	144,820	142,312	129,551	114,564	-20.9
Average Size	217	291	299	364	67.7

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

F. PLANT AND ANIMAL HABITATS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a regular listing of threatened species, endangered species, species of concern, and candidate species for counties across the United States. Last updated in May 2007, Wilson County has nine species that are listed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. Table 9.4 below shows the species identified as threatened, endangered, or other classification in Wilson County.

Table 9.4
Threatened, Endangered, or Species of Concern in Wilson County

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status
American Eel	<i>Anguilla rostrata</i>	Species of Concern
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Threatened
Carolina Madtom	<i>Noturus furiosus</i>	Species of Concern
Eastern Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus henslowii susurrans</i>	Species of Concern
Pinewoods Shiner	<i>Lythrurus matutinus</i>	Species of Concern
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	<i>Picoides borealis</i>	Endangered
Atlantic Pigtoe	<i>Fusconaia masoni</i>	Species of Concern
Dwarf Wedgemussel	<i>Alasmidonta heterodon</i>	Endangered
Michaux's Sumac	<i>Rhus michauxii</i>	Endangered

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Habitats where these species are located should be protected to ensure their survival in the future. Areas of the County where these species are commonly found should be documented, and policies to protect and preserve the land that they live on should become a priority for the County.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal:

Preserve the natural resources, water, air and land that have made Wilson County a wonderful place to live.

Strategies:

- Continue to protect the Flood Plain areas
- Continue to protect the water supply / watershed areas
- Promote conservation subdivision designs
- Maintain and improve surface and subsurface water quality
- Provide opportunities for farmland preservation
- Protect endangered plant and animal habitats

- Protect areas with severe soil limitations from intense development
- The potential greenway initiative as mentioned in the community facilities would also help preserve and protect the natural resource areas within the county

CHAPTER 10 CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

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CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

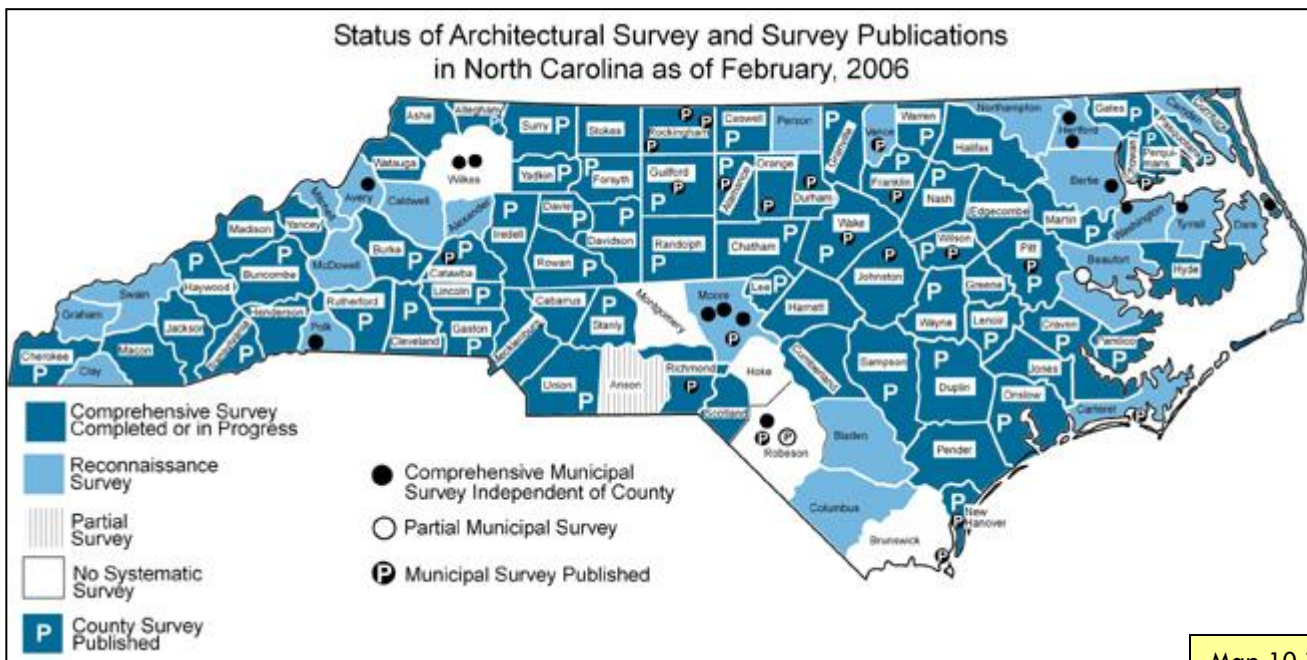
I. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

The purpose of this element of the Comprehensive Plan is to document Wilson County sites with historic, architectural, or cultural significance that add to the quality of life for residents. The resources identified in the section should be targeted for preservation so that their presence and significance can be enjoyed and appreciated by future generations.

II. BACKGROUND OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS IN WILSON COUNTY

A. Participation in the Statewide Historic Survey

Since 1976, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in the Office of Archives and History has facilitated North Carolina's statewide architectural survey program. The Preservation Office sponsors and co-sponsors, assists and guides dozens of local and regional architectural surveys throughout the state--all part of the statewide program whose mission is to identify, record, and encourage the preservation of North Carolina's rich and varied historic and architectural heritage.



County surveys have been completed in 58 of the state's 100 counties, and regional overview surveys have recorded selected properties in an additional 27 counties. Municipal surveys have been completed in about 60 communities. Survey files, organized by county, are maintained at the Survey and Planning Branch, State Historic Preservation Office, and at the regional offices of Archives and History, along with survey project reports and detailed maps showing the locations of every recorded property. Photographic negatives are filed separately in the Archives and Records Section of Archives and History.

Locally sponsored comprehensive surveys have recorded hundreds of historic places in Wilson (1979-1980) and Wilson County (1980-1981). Surveys are cooperative local-state projects accomplished with grants and staff assistance from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The SHPO statewide inventory contains information on over 260 archaeological sites in Wilson County. Two books were published as a result of these surveys: *Wilson, North Carolina: Historic Buildings Inventory*, by Robert Bainbridge and Kate Ohno and *Wilson County's Architectural Heritage*, also by Ohno. The latter details the history of Wilson County and provides a photographic inventory and written description of 158 historically significant resources in each township of the County. The document is no longer in print, but is kept on file by the City of Wilson.

B. Historic Properties Commission

As part of the celebration of the nation's bicentennial in 1976 and to participate in the new federally established preservation effort, the City of Wilson formed a Historic Properties Commission. Many area residents realized the volume of significant pre-19th century architecture in Wilson and decided to do their part toward its preservation. In 1987, Wilson County joined the preservation effort, and a joint Historic Properties Commission was established with six member representing the City of Wilson and six members representing Wilson County.

The City of Wilson adopted a Historic District ordinance in 1988, and received the designation of "Certified Local Government (CLG)" from the State Historic Preservation Office. In North Carolina, governments which qualify for this certification must have an active and legally adequate historic preservation commission, and must meet the federal requirements for certification. The Historic Preservation Act amendments of 1980 state that a local government must:

1. Enforce appropriate state or local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties.
2. Establish an adequate and qualified historic preservation review commission.
3. Maintain a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties compatible with the statewide survey.
4. Provide for adequate public participation in the local historic preservation program, including the process of recommending properties to the National Register of Historic Places.
5. Satisfactorily perform responsibilities delegated to it under the 1980 Act.

Local governments and local commissions benefit from being CLGs in the following ways:

1. The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office must set aside at least 10 percent of the money it receives from the federal Historic Preservation Fund for CLGs. Each CLG in the state is eligible to compete for a portion of that money to be used as a matching grant for eligible survey, planning, pre-development, or development activities. This has become a significant advantage for CLGs in recent years as general grant funding from both federal and state sources has declined. In addition, only CLGs are generally able to direct federal Historic Preservation Fund grant money toward projects relating to physical restoration and stabilization.
2. CLGs review all new nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for properties and districts within their boundaries. Consequently, CLGs share their

local expertise with state and federal preservationists and gain a say in state and federal recognition of historic resources in their areas.

3. CLGs are encouraged to expand the expertise of their commission members and must provide for their continuing education. The community benefits from the increased expertise and knowledge of preservationists at the local level, and CLG commission members benefit from increased opportunities and from the recognition of their communities.

Wilson County chose to end its participation in the Joint Historic Properties Commission in 2000. While there are still locally designated landmarks within Wilson County's jurisdiction, there is no funding or mechanism to maintain the program. There is also no local governmental liaison for Wilson County. The City of Wilson still has an active nine-member Historic Properties Commission made up of City of Wilson residents with a dedicated full-time staff member.

C. Preservation Efforts

Since 1976, Wilson and Wilson County, have received \$57,146 in federal matching grant money administered by the State Historic Preservation Office. This money went toward the initial Historic Surveys of Wilson and Wilson County, as well as National Register nominations throughout the county.

The City of Wilson has five National Register Historic Districts and five National Register Historic Landmarks. Three of the districts are also locally designated Historic Districts. Wilson County has six National Register Historic Districts. Wilson County has 14 National Register Historic Landmarks. There are also 76 locally designated Historic Landmarks the County, including those located in the City of Wilson.

Nineteen income-producing tax credit projects have been completed in Wilson County at a total construction investment of \$4,671,100, including the Cherry Hotel, Colonial Apartment, and Mercy Hospital in the City of Wilson. One residential renovation is has taken place using the non-income-producing tax credits. State appropriations totaling \$139,500 went toward to the restoration of Coon School, Mercy Hospital, Wilson Community Theatre, and the Wilson Collegiate Institute.

The State Historic Preservation Office has provided consultation services in the rehabilitation of the former Federal Building, Mercy Hospital, Verita Apartments, Cherry Hotel, and the Wilson Depot in Wilson; and the Alfred Thompson House, the Ward-Applewhite-Thompson House and other projects across the county.

III. DESIGNATED HISTORIC LANDMARKS & DISTRICTS

A. National Register Historic Districts & Landmarks

City of Wilson National Register Historic Districts

1. Old Wilson (also locally designated)
2. West Nash (also locally designated)
3. Broad-Kenan (also locally designated)
4. East Wilson
5. Downtown Central Business/Tobacco Warehouse

Wilson County National Register Historic Districts

1. Black Creek Rural
2. Elm City Municipal
3. Lucama Municipal
4. Upper Town Creek Rural
5. Woodard Family Rural
6. Evansdale Rural

City of Wilson National Register Historic Landmarks

1. Branch Bank
2. Cherry Hotel
3. Moses Roundtree House (107 N Roundtree)
4. Davis-Whitehead-Harriss House (Miss Betty's 600 W Nash)
5. Wilson County Courthouse

Wilson County National Register Historic Landmarks

1. WH Applewhite House (58, Stantonsburg area)
2. Manalcus Aycock House (Center & Central Streets, BC)
3. General Joshua Barnes House (SR 1326 & 1327)
4. Bullock-Dew House (Raleigh Fire Tower Rd past 581, Sims area)
5. Edmondson-Woodard House (58 & Grimsley Store Rd)
6. WH Langley (SR 1003, Elm City area)
7. Dr HD Lucas House & office (Center St, BC - DEMOLISHED)
8. Joseph John Pender House (Pender Cross Roads area - moved)
9. WR Pridgen House (Pridgen Rd, EC vicinity - DEMOLISHED)
10. Major James Scarborough House (222 near 264, Saratoga area)
11. Ward-Applewhite-Thompson House (Sand Pit Rd, Stantonsburg area)
12. Webb-Baron-Wells House (42 near Edgecombe Cty line - vandalized)
13. Olzie Whitehead Williams House (moved to Lake Wilson Rd)
14. Stephen & Dr. Stephen Woodard Houses, BC vicinity - DEMOLISHED)

B. Locally Designated Historic Landmarks for the City of Wilson & Wilson County

1. WH Applewhite House (Stantonsburg)
2. Manalcus Aycock House (Black Creek)
3. Selby Anderson House
4. William Anderson House
5. Atlantic Coastline Railroad Depot
6. Frank W Barnes House
7. General Joshua Barnes House (Annabelle Haynes House-Wilson)
8. William Barnes House (Stantonsburg)
9. Boykin-Edmundson House
10. Branch Bank & Trust Building
11. Bullock-Dew House (Sims)
12. Caldwell Hall (demolished)
13. Cherry Hotel (Wilson)
14. Connor-Lucas House
15. Judge HG Connor House

16. Cicero Culpepper Carriage Shop
17. Camillus L Darden House
18. Davis-Whitehead-Harriss House
19. Edmondson-Woodard House (Stantonsburg)
20. Cora Farmer House
21. Methodist Episcopal Church South (First United Methodist Church)
22. Fire Station #1 (Hope Station)
23. Oliver Nestus Freeman House
24. Allie Fleming House
25. Gold-Harrell House
26. James E Gorham House
27. William C Gorham House (demolished)
28. William W Graves House
29. Herring's Drug Store
30. Oscar Hooks House
31. First Baptist Church (Jackson Chapel)
32. Eugene L Jordan House
33. Benjamin F Lane House
34. WH Langley House
35. Oswald Lipscomb House (Elm City)
36. London's Primitive Baptist Church
37. Dr. HD Lucas House & Office (Black Creek-demolished)
38. Lucas-Barnes House
39. Joseph John Pender House (Gardners Township)
40. Piver-Moss House
41. Planter's Bank Building
42. WR Pridgen House (Taylor Township-demolished)
43. Orange Hotel
44. Person-Beddingfield House (Stantonsburg)
45. Wilson Primitive Baptist Church (Christ Temple of Praise)
46. Peter J Royall House
47. Moses Roundtree House (Wilson)
48. James Roundtree House (Wilson)
49. St John AME Zion Church
50. St Timothy's Episcopal Church
51. Major James Scarborough House (Saratoga)
52. AJ Simms House
53. AP Simpson House
54. Smith-Bishop House
55. Frederick Swindell House
56. Jacob Tomlinson House (Black Creek)
57. US Post Office & Federal Courthouse
58. Ward-Applewhite-Thompson House (Stantonsburg)
59. Weaver-Simms House
60. Webb-Barron-Wells House (Gardners Township)
61. RS Wells House (Elm City)
62. Olzie Whitehead-Williams House
63. Whitehead-Barnes Building (demolition pending)
64. Wiggins-Hadley House

65. James E Wilkins House
66. Robert S Wilkins House
67. William Woodard-Banks House (Gardners Township)
68. Williams-Cozart House
69. (Grady Building &) Wilson Theatre
70. Winstead-Hardy Commercial Building
71. Woman's Club
72. Wilson County Courthouse
73. Stephen Woodard/Dr Stephen Woodard Houses (Black Creek-demolished)
74. David Woodard House (Legal Services)
75. Wilson Collegiate Institute
76. Wilson Hospital & Tubercular Center (Mercy Hospital)

IV. CULTURAL RESOURCES

The City of Wilson is the cultural center of Wilson County. Located in the center, are three gardens, six art galleries, and four museums including the North Carolina Baseball Museum and the Imagination Station Science Museum. Also located in the City of Wilson are the Wilson Arts Center, the Edna Boykin Cultural Center, and the Barton College/Wilson Symphony Orchestra.

Other museums in Wilson County include the Windmill Farm in Lucama, the Tobacco Farm Life Museum in Kenly, the Charles B. Aycock Birthplace in Fremont, and the Country Doctor Museum in Bailey.

Wilson County has library locations including the main library in downtown Wilson and five satellite branches. There is also a bookmobile to provide books to residents in outlying areas.

The Wilson Visitors Bureau has published a very thorough visitor's guide highlighting many of these cultural resources.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal:

Preserve and protect historical and cultural resources for the benefit of both current and future residents.

Strategies:

- Update historic survey
- Re-establish a County Historic Preservation Commission and Local Historic Preservation Program
 - Use survey to determine what needs to be protected (i.e.: old tobacco barns are quickly disappearing)
- Market Historic and Cultural Resources for tourism potential
 - Tobacco Life Museum
 - Potential for an "antiques" museum

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
❖
WILSON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

CHAPTER 11 LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

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LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

In an effort to make informed recommendations to guide future growth and development within Wilson County, it is essential to provide information on existing and future land use patterns. The identification of land use patterns enables citizens, policy makers and developers to identify specific areas available for future growth, while enabling the community to continue growth patterns that are successful.

It should be clearly stated that land use and zoning are not interchangeable terms. Zoning is a mechanism for prescribing land uses and associated physical standards for development, while land use describes how land actually develops. The existing land use pattern of any urbanized area is a dynamic evolution that is ultimately a reflection of population trends, economy, resource and service availability, culture and local history. Without a rational planning strategy to guide it, land use can quickly evolve into urban sprawl, blight and piecemeal development without a sense of identity or community. This element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses the existing pattern of land use in Wilson County to identify trends and identify future growth strategies and goals.

As stated earlier in the Plan, the County was divided into three separate planning areas as a means of providing a more workable planning program. The County's total land use is therefore an accumulation of land use distribution within each planning area. Maps of existing land use are presented by individual planning area as well as County-wide.

II. RURAL, TRANSITIONAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

This Comprehensive Plan performed an initial analysis of the land in Wilson County by looking at the parcel density in 2006. This analysis provides a quick snapshot of how the County is developing in varying areas. The following categories were established to measure population and parcel density in relation to the type of development within the region. The general characteristics including the lot size and dwelling units per acre were also estimated.

The *rural classification* applies to areas which have 0 to 64 dwelling units per square mile and tracts of land that are ten acres or greater in size.

The *transitional classification* applies to areas which have 64 to 213 dwelling units per square mile, and lots which range in size from three to 9.99 acres.

The *urban classification* applies to areas which have more than 213 dwelling units per square mile, and lots which are less than three acres in size.

The following sections will explain the methodology of determining the classifications, provide a map showing what areas qualify under each classification, and will provide a quick overview of what areas of the County are already urban, in transition or remain rural in the year 2008.

A. METHODOLOGY FOR THE CLASSIFICATIONS

The first determination for placing parcels into the classifications is lot size. The lot size categories for Rural (ten acres or greater), Transition (three to 9.99 acres), and Urban (less than three acres) areas were established by utilizing accepted “smart growth” principals and North Carolina standards for development. North Carolina Subdivision law specifically exempts lots ten acres or greater in size from local government subdivision regulation since they are considered to be rural in nature.¹⁴ Within the planning profession, it is generally accepted that areas, which are fully developed with lots of three acres or smaller in size are urban. The transition category was proposed to fill the gap between the areas identified as urban and those recognized as rural.

Using the ten acre or greater category, the density assumption was made that at least one dwelling unit for each ten acres of land was in the rural area. The one dwelling unit per ten acres yields a maximum of sixty-four dwelling units per 640 acres, which is the same as 64 dwelling units per square mile.

Example:

1 dwelling unit per 10 acres

640 acres (square mile) ÷ 10 acres = 64 dwelling units per square mile

Second, it is necessary to determine the approximate persons per square mile, which was determined in order to establish the population density within each of the three designated categories. To begin this analysis the average persons per household figure for the County was determined for the year 2000 (2.51). The person per household figure is the means to establish the persons per square mile for each of the three densities.

For example, the rural classification contains a maximum of 64 dwelling units per square mile. The study region as a whole has an average household size of 2.5 persons. The 64 dwelling units, when multiplied by 2.5 persons per household, equal 160 persons per square mile. The same process was used to determine the persons per square mile for the transitional and urban classifications.

Rural Classification: 0 – 160.0 persons per square mile

1 dwelling unit / 10 acres

640 acres (square mile) ÷ 10 acres = 64 dwelling units / square mile

64 dwelling units x 2.5 persons / household = 160.0 persons / square mile

Transitional Classification: >160.0 – 532.5 persons per square mile

Minimum 1 dwelling unit / 3 acres (Maximum 1 dwelling unit / 9.99 acres)

640 acres (square mile) ÷ 3 acres = 213 dwelling units / square mile

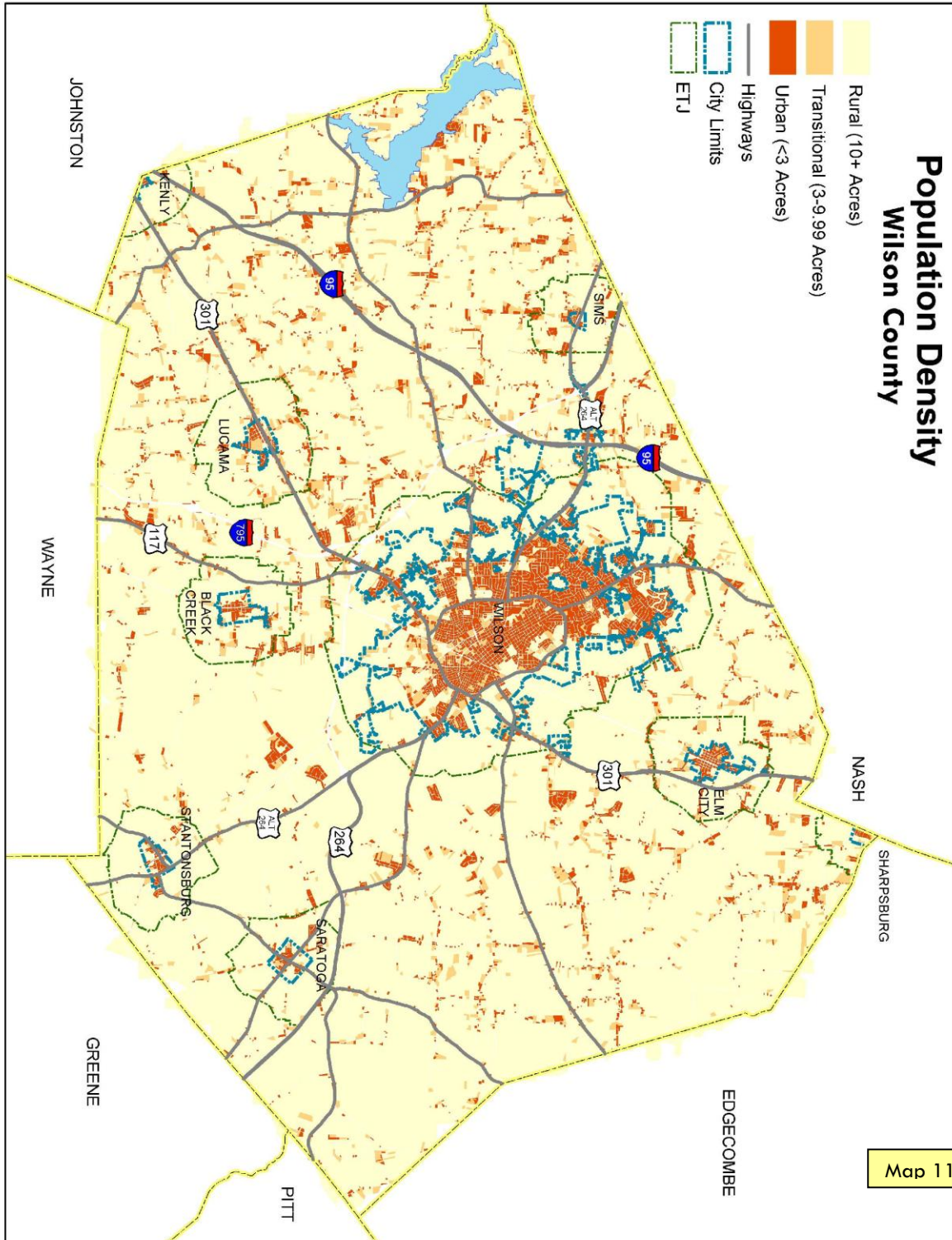
213 dwelling units / square mile x 2.5 persons / household = 532.5 persons / square mile

¹⁴ NCGS 160A-376 (2) and 153A-335 (2).

Urban Classification: >532.5 persons per square mile
This class includes all development on lots where the density is greater than 1 dwelling unit per 3 acres.

B. POPULATION DENSITY AND LAND REQUIREMENT TRENDS

Map 11.1, below shows the population density for Wilson County.



Based on a 2006 parcel data layer, the dominant urban centers are immediately apparent, including not only the City of Wilson but all of the municipal jurisdictions as well. As expected, parcels are the denser within the corporate limits of the municipal jurisdictions and are highly rural in the unincorporated areas of the County. The areas that qualified as transitional are mostly found in and around the ETJ boundaries. One noticeable area where higher parcel densities are appearing is along the border and in close proximity to Buckhorn Lake.

Overall, Wilson County is primarily rural in nature, with approximately 85 percent of the area qualifying under the rural classification. The remaining 15 percent is split evenly between transitional and urban classifications. Map 11.1 helps to determine where growth has occurred in the past, and seems to be occurring in the future. The following sections review the specific land uses in the unincorporated portions of the County, and a comparison of the existing parcel density and land uses is provided in Section VI: Trends and Observations.

III. EXISTING LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

The existing land use element assesses the distribution of land by use classification within the unincorporated areas of Wilson County as it existed in 2006. This data was obtained via a windshield survey, which was performed by County staff in 2006. Windshield surveys are one of the most accurate ways to identify existing land uses. Parcels in question were checked against the Wilson County Tax Assessor Reports.

The following general land use classifications were created to describe the various types of development in Wilson County.

1. **Agricultural**. Includes all parcels that are clearly used for any variety of agricultural uses such as pasture, hay fields, and cropland.
2. **Residential Low-Density / Agricultural**. Includes all properties that have active agricultural uses, but are also used as a primary residence for a single-family detached dwelling.
3. **Residential Low-Density**. Includes all single-family detached residential units on individual lots two acres or greater.
4. **Residential**. Includes all single-family detached residential units on individual lots smaller than two acres or any multi-family units (duplexes, apartments, and single-family attached structures).
5. **Mobile Home Park**. Includes all pre-HUD and HUD standard prefabricated housing units located in mobile home parks.
6. **Commercial**. Includes all retail businesses, shopping centers, hotels, restaurants, medical centers, professional and medical offices, and similar uses.
7. **Industrial**. Includes all manufacturing and fabricating facilities, shops, mills, warehouse, storage units and similar facilities.

8. **Government / Institutional.** Includes all parcels that have governmental uses, landfills, churches, cemeteries or schools.
9. **Undeveloped.** Includes all vacant parcels and unoccupied buildings.

In addition to the 9 land use classifications above, some other classifications will be noted on the maps. First, Buckhorn Lake is considered a separate land use classification as well as a small area that has been accessed in Greene County. This area is located to the south of Stantonsburg on the border of Greene and Wilson counties. Finally, there are areas where there is no data available – that are listed as “other.” The vast majority of these areas are located within municipal jurisdictions; however, there are some parcels scattered throughout the County that do not have data available. Some possible reasons behind this are because a windshield survey did not provide conclusive results or the Tax Assessors Report contradicted the findings of the windshield survey.

Land uses were not observed for areas in the corporate limits or ETJs of any jurisdiction of Wilson County. The existing conditions analyzed in Chapters 5-10 of this Comprehensive Plan are reported in a County-wide basis because the conditions in each of the jurisdictions will affect decisions made in Wilson County. However, the existing land use information has only been provided for the unincorporated areas of Wilson County because Wilson County has no planning and zoning jurisdiction in these areas. Growth management strategies are recommended later, but specific land uses are not prescribed for areas under municipal jurisdiction control.

IV. COUNTY-WIDE LAND USE DISTRIBUTION

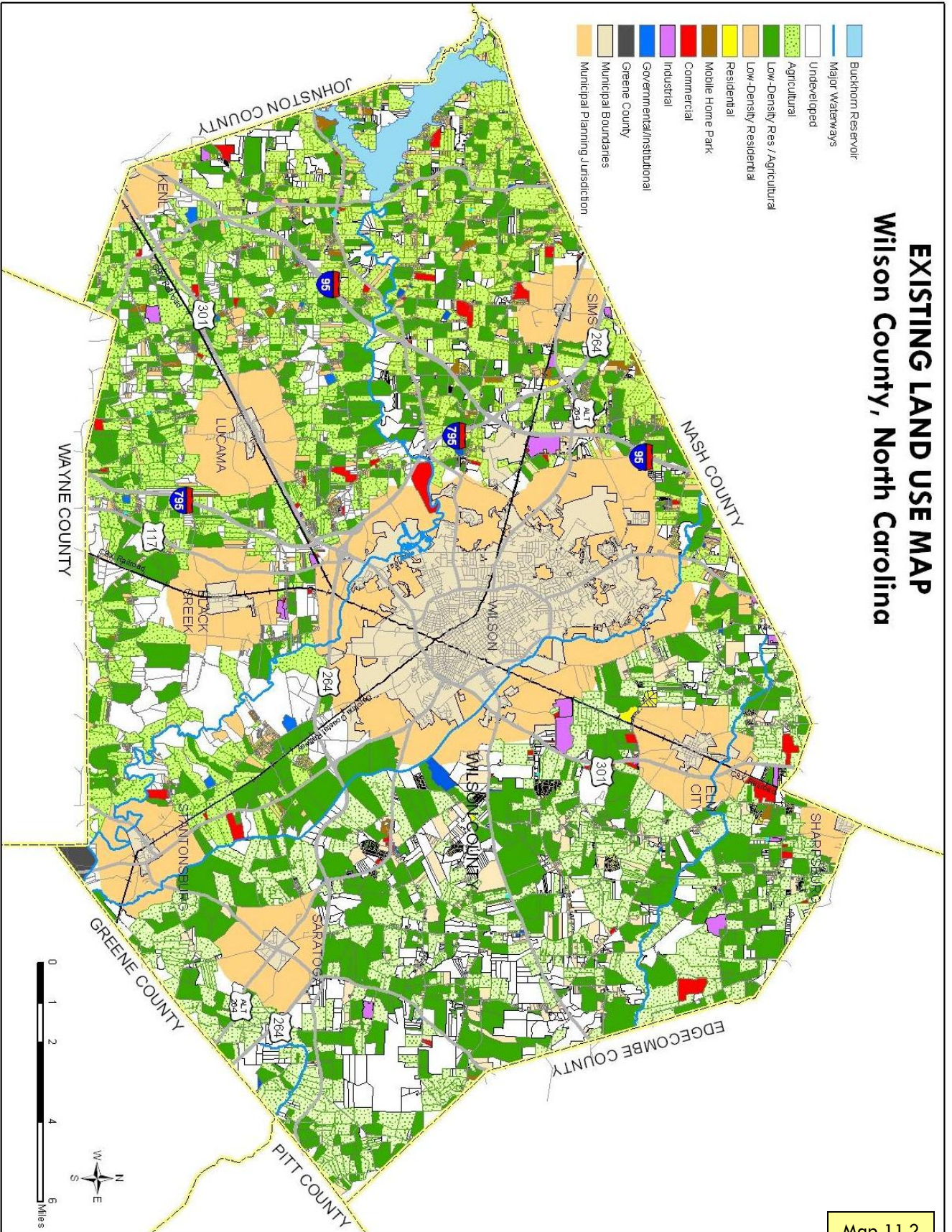
Wilson County occupies 239,485 total acres (374 square miles) of land including road right of ways, and 232,037 acres (362 square miles) in parcel area. In the land use analysis, 196,477 acres were examined, which excluded land within municipal planning jurisdiction.

According to the existing land use map, below, approximately 20 percent of the unincorporated portion of the County is undeveloped leaving the remaining 80 percent developed in some fashion. The fact that only 20 percent of the unincorporated portion of the County remains undeveloped seems shocking, however, an additional 36 percent is used primarily for agricultural uses at an extremely low density, and another 31 percent of the County has been classified as low-density residential/agricultural.

Rural open spaces and prime farmlands are being converted to residential and other suburban uses. In order to protect Wilson County’s rural character—shown by approximately 87 percent of the County characterized by either no development, agriculture, or low-density residential agricultural—Wilson County will ultimately have to develop specific zoning and growth management tools for directing future development to more sustainable areas.

The existing pattern of land uses in the unincorporated portions of the County is shown first by Map 11.2 of the entire County with a corresponding table showing the exact distribution of land uses. Maps of each individual planning area follow this Section.

EXISTING LAND USE MAP Wilson County, North Carolina



Map 11.2

As you can see from Map 11.2, residential and agricultural uses comprise the highest percentage of land uses across the unincorporated portions of the County.

**Table 11.1
County-Wide Land Use Distribution**

Land Use Classification	Acreage	Percent of Total Acreage ¹⁵
Agricultural	71,428	36.4
Residential Agricultural	60,625	30.9
Residential Low-Density	12,384	6.3
Residential	2,587	1.3
Mobile Home Parks	821	0.4
Commercial	3,382	1.7
Industrial	1,346	0.7
Government/Institutional	835	0.4
Other	869	0.4
Undeveloped	38,990	19.8
Buckhorn	2,857	1.5
Greene County Jurisdiction	353	0.2
TOTAL	196,477	100%

Source: Windshield Survey, 2006 and Comparison with Wilson County Tax Records 2008.

Table 11.1 helps to further illustrate the distribution of land uses throughout the unincorporated portions of Wilson County. Almost 39 percent of the County is used for residential purposes, with the great majority (30.9 percent) being Residential Agriculture (low-density residential in association with agricultural use). In addition, nearly 36 percent of the County was still utilized as agricultural lands as of 2006 when reviewed with tax records in 2008.

Commercial uses are limited to just under two percent of the total unincorporated acreage. The land use distribution of industrial properties (0.7%) supports the findings of Chapter 7: Economic Development that industrial uses are typically limited to areas where they can receive public utilities from a municipality since the County water lines cannot support more than light commercial uses and there is no County-wide sewer system. Industrial properties are typically situated adjacent to municipal jurisdictions or in areas where city water and sewer lines exist within the unincorporated areas of the County.

Almost 20 percent of the unincorporated areas of the County remain wholly undeveloped. It is interesting to note that the large undeveloped areas of the County are affected by environmental factors, most likely limiting their potential for development. However, development pressures still remain on the over 67 percent agricultural and residential-agricultural land classifications.

V. PLANNING AREA LAND USE DISTRIBUTION

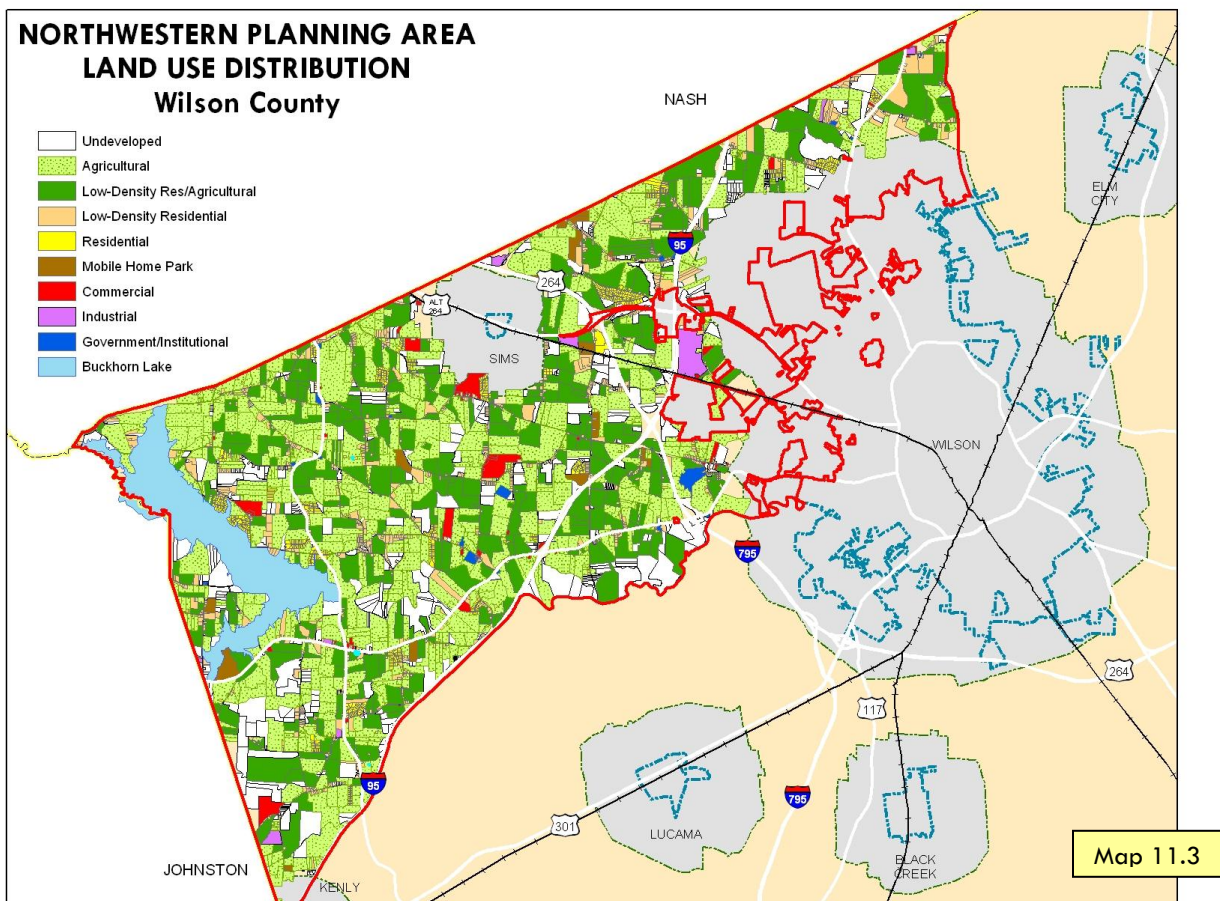
Using a holistic approach to the County's land use distribution provides some very valuable information, however, utilizing the proposed planning areas helps to develop additional trends and observations about what areas of the County are experiencing the highest development pressures. Public input, population analyses and key stakeholder

¹⁵ The total acreage does not include municipal jurisdictions or road right-of-way.

interviews have suggested that the northwestern portion of the County has seen the highest growth rates of all of Wilson County. The analysis of land use distribution will help shed additional light on how the County’s planning areas are growing. Maps and tables have been provided for each planning area to help illustrate the distribution of the various land use classifications.

A. NORTHWESTERN PLANNING AREA

The northwestern planning area has been identified as the fastest growing area in Wilson County. While we have no historical land use information for a comparison, the distribution of the current land uses will likely provide some valuable clues to how the area is growing. Map 11.3 shows the existing land uses in the northwestern planning area.



The northwestern planning area is approximately 50,206 acres in size excluding area within municipal jurisdictions and road right-of-way. According to Table 4.1, although the northwestern planning area has the smallest acreage, it had the highest population in 2000, and is projected to have a population of approximately 16,500 by 2020. As such, this planning area has the highest population density, and it can be assumed that the land use distribution will have a higher percentage of low-density residential, residential and mobile home parks than the County as a whole. Table 11.2 below provides the acreages and percentages of each land use classification within the

northwestern planning area. The fourth column provides the percentages from Table 11.1 for the County-wide land uses for easier comparison.

**Table 11.2
Northwestern Planning Area Land Use Distribution**

Land Use Classification	Acreage of Planning Area	Percent of Total Acreage in Planning Area	County-Wide Land Use Percentages
Agricultural	18,800	37.4	36.4
Residential Agricultural	13,511	26.9	30.9
Residential Low-Density	3,052	6.1	6.3
Residential	973	1.9	1.3
Mobile Home Parks	454	0.9	0.4
Commercial	1,356	2.7	1.7
Industrial	463	0.9	0.7
Government/Institutional	207	0.4	0.4
Other	435	0.9	0.4
Undeveloped	8,098	16.1	19.8
Buckhorn	2,857	5.7	1.5
TOTAL	50,206	100%	N/A

Source: Windshield Survey, 2006 and Comparison with Wilson County Tax Records 2008.

Overall, the northwestern planning area has a similar distribution of land uses as the County as a whole. The primary land uses are agricultural, low-density residential / agricultural, and undeveloped. There are slightly fewer parcels that qualify as residential agricultural, and residential low-density; while there are slightly more parcels that qualify as agricultural, residential and mobile home parks. There is more commercial land in this portion of the County as compared to the unincorporated areas of the County as a whole.

The Buckhorn category is used to provide a land use designation for Buckhorn Lake, which is located entirely within the northwestern planning area. Additionally, it should be noted that there is a smaller percentage of undeveloped land in this planning area in comparison to the County as a whole.

B. SOUTHERN PLANNING AREA

The total acreage of the southern planning area is 62,844 acres, making it the second largest planning area in this analysis. The estimated population in 2000 for this planning area is 10,872 persons. This planning area has the most severe environmental limitations with a large percentage of the land being covered by floodplains, waterways, and wetlands. The percentage of undeveloped land is expected to be higher in this planning area than in any of the others in comparison to the county-wide total.

Map 11.4 on the following page shows the distribution of land uses in the southern planning area.

Map on following page.

Table 11.3 shows the acreage, overall percentage for the southern planning area and a comparison column of the County-wide distribution percentages.

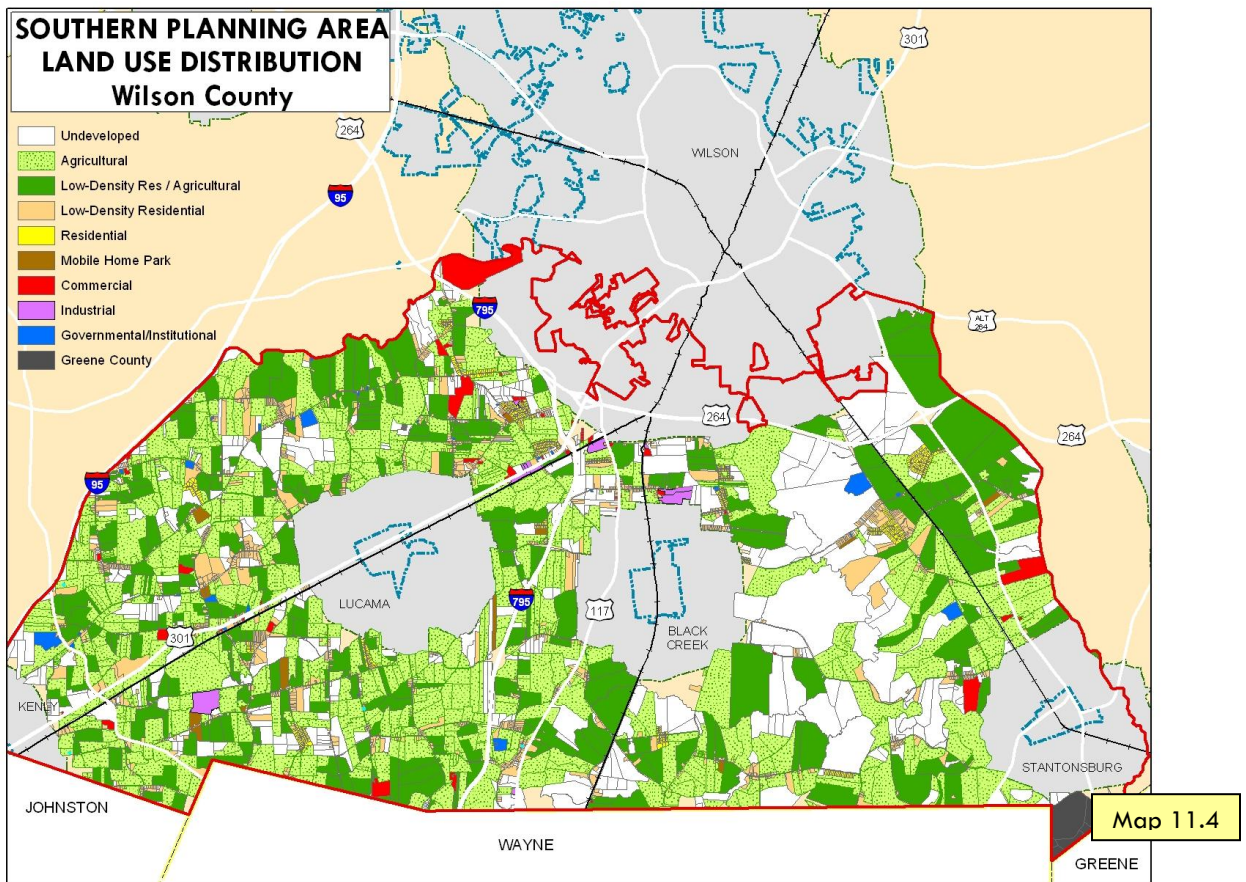


Table 11.3
Southern Planning Area Land Use Distribution

Land Use Classification	Acreage of Planning Area	Percent of Total Acreage in Planning Area	County-Wide Land Use Percentages
Agricultural	22,534	35.9	36.4
Residential Agricultural	19,869	31.6	30.9
Residential Low-Density	3,536	5.6	6.3
Residential	592	0.9	1.3
Mobile Home Parks	245	0.4	0.4
Commercial	815	1.3	1.7
Industrial	227	0.4	0.7
Government/Institutional	293	0.5	0.4
Other	42	0.1	0.4
Undeveloped	14,337	22.8	19.8
Green County Jurisdiction	353	0.6	0.2
TOTAL	62,844	100%	N/A

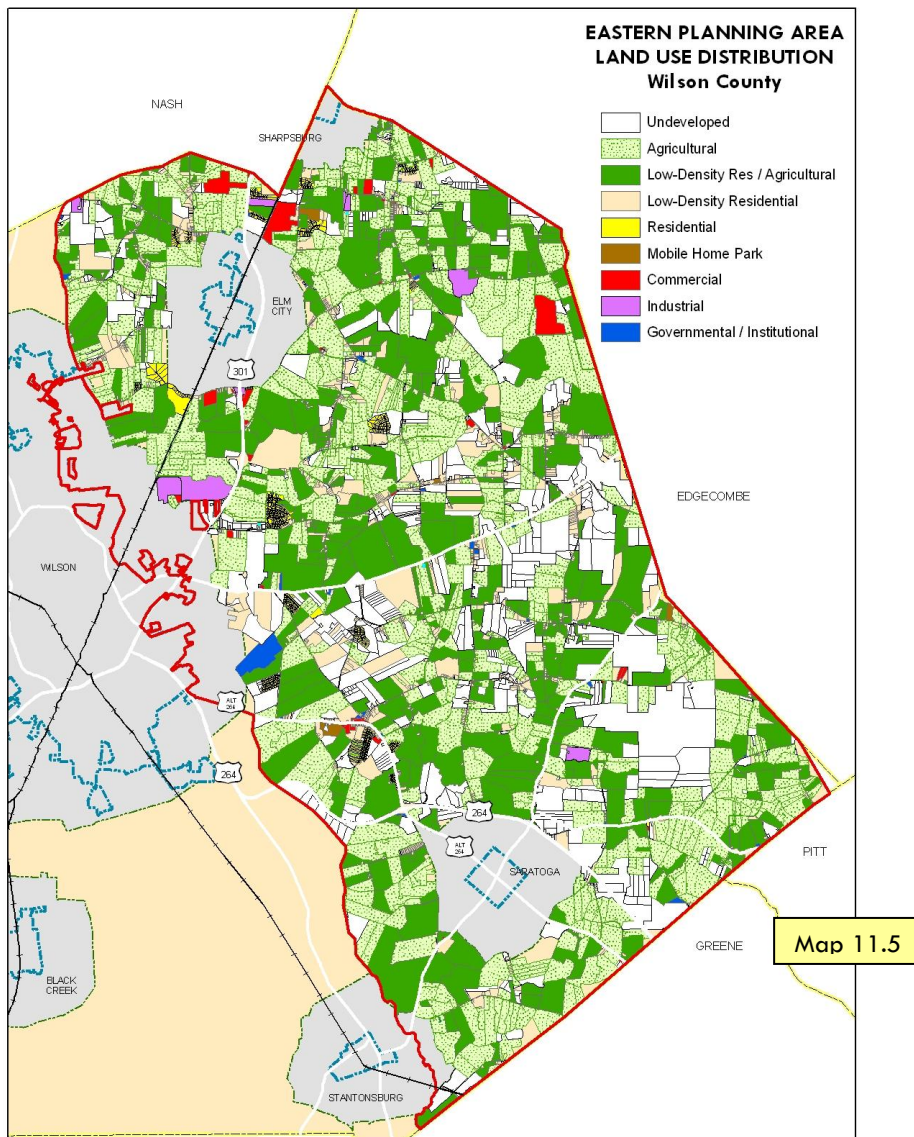
Source: Windshield Survey, 2006 and Comparison with Wilson County Tax Records 2008.

As found in the northwestern planning area, the distributions of the land use classifications generally mimic the overall County results in the Southern Area too. Agricultural and low-density residential / agricultural make up the largest percentages of the land use classifications in this planning area. As expected with the environmental constraints that are found within this planning area, the amount of undeveloped land is increased over the County-wide results.

The amount of industrial land is only slightly lower than the overall County; however, as the Woodward Parkway industrial “megasite” is developed this percentage will increase. Additionally, the great majority of the parcels that would qualify for economic development interest (over 500 acres) are located in this planning area as well.

C. EASTERN PLANNING AREA

The third and final planning area, the Eastern Planning area, is geographically, the largest of all of the planning areas.



The eastern planning area is approximately 83,428 acres in size subtracting road rights-of-way and areas within any municipal jurisdiction. Even though this planning area is approximately 34 percent larger than the southern planning area, the estimated population is only 3,000 persons higher. Also, the eastern planning area is approximately 66 percent larger than the northwestern planning area and has roughly the same population.

Map 11.5 on the previous page shows mostly agricultural and low-density residential land with some concentrations of industrial and commercial uses. Table 11.4 below shows the acreage and overall percentages of each of the land use classifications found in this planning area.

**Table 11. 4
Eastern Planning Area Land Use Distribution**

Land Use Classification	Acreage of Planning Area	Percent of Total Acreage in Planning Area	County-Wide Land Use Percentages
Agricultural	30,095	36.1	36.4
Residential Agricultural	27,245	32.7	30.9
Residential Low-Density	5,796	6.9	6.3
Residential	1,022	1.2	1.3
Mobile Home Parks	122	0.1	0.4
Commercial	1,211	1.5	1.7
Industrial	656	0.8	0.7
Government/Institutional	335	0.3	0.4
Other	392	0.0	0.4
Undeveloped	16,554	19.8	19.8
TOTAL	83,428	100%	N/A

Source: Windshield Survey, 2006 and Comparison with Wilson County Tax Records 2008.

The eastern planning area has roughly the same amount of agricultural land with a slightly higher percentage of low-density residential land uses than the County as a whole. Based on the estimated population of the planning area and the acreage, there is generally a low population density in this area, which is supported by these types of land uses.

Commercial use within the eastern area is very similar to the county-wide commercial use. Additionally, the 335 acres of government / institutional uses includes the County landfill, which is located just to the east of the jurisdictional limits of the City of Wilson. Also, there is an identical percentage of undeveloped land in this planning area as there is County-wide. A comparison of each of the planning areas is provided in Section VI below.

VI. TRENDS AND OBSERVATIONS

Wilson County has been an agriculturally driven community since its inception. True to its history, the County still maintains a large amount of agricultural and rural residential land uses. However, development pressures are influencing owners of large areas of land to sell to developers of residential subdivisions. This is steadily increasing the County's

population, placing additional burden on infrastructure and utility systems, and creating a school system where severe overcrowding could be a very real problem in the near future.

Industrial and commercial development is primarily located within each of the municipal jurisdictions. The primary factor restricting the development of non-residential land uses outside of the municipalities is the availability of water and sewer. The County's water system provides service to residential and light commercial and has approximately 2,900 customers. The reliance on public utility systems, more specifically the City of Wilson's public utility systems, restricts heavy commercial and industrial uses to the areas within the City's jurisdiction or to areas that have utility lines already extended out into the County.

Table 11.5 below provides a means of comparison for the different land use classifications in the County as a whole and in each of the smaller planning areas.

**Table 11. 5
Land Use Distribution Comparisons**

Land Use Classification	County-Wide Land Use Percentages (%)	NWPA Land Use Percentages (%)	SPA Land Use Percentages (%)	EPA Land Use Percentages (%)
Agricultural	36.4	37.4	35.9	36.1
Residential Agricultural	30.9	26.9	31.6	32.7
Residential Low-Density	6.3	6.1	5.6	6.9
Residential	1.3	1.9	0.9	1.2
Mobile Home Parks	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.1
Commercial	1.7	2.7	1.3	1.5
Industrial	0.7	0.9	0.4	0.8
Government/Institutional	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3
Other	0.4	0.9	0.1	0.0
Undeveloped	19.8	16.1	22.8	19.8
Buckhorn	1.5	5.7	N/A	N/A
Greene County Jurisdiction	0.2	N/A	0.6	N/A

Source: Windshield Survey, 2006 and Comparison with Wilson County Tax Records 2008.

Table 11.5 shows a general distribution of land uses that carries from the County as a whole to each of the smaller planning areas. In each area of analysis agricultural land classifications makes up the largest percentage of land at about 36 percent. Low-density residential agricultural follows as the next largest land use classification. Low-density residential, as a mix of both residential and agricultural uses, makes up between 26.9 and 32.7 percent of the County's land uses. Combined together, agricultural or agricultural related uses make up 67.3 percent County-wide, 64 percent in the northwestern planning area, 67 percent in the southern planning area, and approximately 69 percent in the eastern planning area.

Undeveloped land makes up the third largest land use classification in all analysis areas at almost 20 percent. This increases the rural character of the land in Wilson County. For the entire County, 87 percent is covered by agricultural related uses (including residential agricultural) or vacant land. This is a large amount of land with potential for development, and which needs to be protected through the County's land development regulations to maintain the rural characteristics of the area.

Non-agriculturally related land uses, such as low-density residential, residential, and mobile home parks make up a much smaller percentage of the County's land use distribution. Most likely, these types of land uses are concentrated within the municipal jurisdictions where public water and sewer are readily available. Most residential uses in the County rely on well and septic for utility provision, and this generally restricts development to larger lot sizes.

Throughout the County (excluding the municipal jurisdictions) 8 percent of the land is classified as non-agriculturally related residential. Each of the smaller planning areas report the same range: the northwestern planning area has 8.9 percent, the southern planning area has only 6.9 percent, and the eastern planning area has 8.2 percent. Based off of the notion that growth is occurring at a high rate in the northwestern area of Wilson County it is expected that the area would have a slightly larger percentage of higher density residential uses than the other areas.

Finally, commercial, industrial, and other uses make up the smallest percentage of land use classifications in each of the areas of analysis. For the reasons mentioned above, this is expected and generally encouraged for the future. In order to properly service commercial and industrial uses, areas should be limited to those that are in or near municipal jurisdictions or near existing utility extensions.

Wilson County has always had a rural characteristic that the residents desire to maintain as one of the most important aspects of the area. Historically and currently, the County has a good mixture of land uses to maintain this characteristic while still providing basic necessities to the residents. A similar land use distribution should be mimicked in the future to maintain the rural/agricultural nature of the County. Growth strategies and a future growth plan are described below.

FUTURE LAND USE & GROWTH MANGEMENT – GOALS & STRATEGIES

Goal(s):

- Establish a future land use / growth management map designating *Rural Growth Areas, Secondary Growth Areas (10-20 years), Primary Growth Areas (5–10 years), and Conservation Areas* that support a basic Town and Country planning model of allowing for both urban growth and rural preservation over the next 20 years, and
- Establish general guidelines for residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, institutional/governmental and agricultural uses that allow for compatibility between uses.

Strategies:

FUTRE LAND USE / GROWTH MANAGEMENT MAP DESIGNATIONS

The future land use/growth management map (Map 11.6) displays four broad categories as described in detail below. The categories include, Rural Growth Areas, Secondary Growth Areas, Primary Growth Areas and Conservation Areas.

Rural Growth Areas

The areas displayed in light green on the Proposed Land Use map represent regions that have significant natural resources, farmland and scattered development. The existing natural resources in the areas are impediments to urban density development and growth. It is expected that this region will continue to have strong low density rural development in the future. Development of infrastructure and various facilities to support urban growth may not be fiscally or environmentally responsible.

Characteristics of the Area

Scattered low density rural residential and small commercial development

Significant natural impediments to development including:

Flood Plain

Severe limitations in soils for septic tank absorption fields

Swamp

Lakes

Streams

Wetlands

Watersheds and water quality areas

Cropland is concentrated in specific areas

Outdoor activities:

Hunting, fishing, boating swimming and camping

Lack of infrastructure in place (capability and potential, but not present):

Water and Sewer

Limited road networks

Low population density

Low traffic volumes

Limited fire protection

Development Goals within the Rural Growth Area

- Protect natural resources
- Promote residential development that maintains the rural nature of the area that is safe and attractive – meeting the needs of the population.
- Promote low density rural residential and agricultural uses
 - Lot sizes
 - 40,000 square feet
 - 30,000 square feet with water
 - 20,000 square feet with water and sewer
- Continue to provide and improve parks and recreational resources

Secondary Growth Areas (Transitional)

A considerable amount of the land adjacent to most of the municipalities in Wilson County is currently being developed in a rural setting with a moderate number of total units. The areas shown in orange represent this region. The region has some urban service available and potential for continued medium density / transitional development. It is expected these areas will likely see heavier growth in a **10-20 year time-frame** as these areas may transition to more urban settings. It is important to recognize appropriate development patterns now to promote orderly growth for years to come. Also, effort should be made

to respect and protect existing agricultural lands from development encroachment that may be adjacent to these transitional areas.

Characteristics of the Area

Scattered low to medium density residential, commercial and industrial development
Natural impediments to development including:
 Limited Flood Plain
 Slight to moderate limitations in soils for septic tank absorption fields
 Limited Swamp
 Streams
 Limited Wetlands
 Limited Watershed Areas
Some cropland: encroachment issues
Infrastructure availability includes:
 Close proximity to urban services
 Significant road networks
Medium to Low population density
Medium traffic volumes
Good fire protection

Development Goals within the Secondary Growth Area

- Protect natural resources
- Provide for safe and attractive environments - development keeping in character with the existing development.
- Promote residential at low to medium density to protect areas where adjacent to farmland/cropland and agricultural uses
- Continue to provide and improve parks and recreational resources
- Option for Higher Density Development to be allowed under a conservation subdivision scenario where homes are clustered and the surrounding environment is preserved.
- Consider developing a detailed small area plan in the northwestern (mostly western) area of Wilson County where increased residential development is occurring

Primary Growth Area (Urban)

The high density urban areas are identified as red on the land use plan map. The area surrounds the City of Wilson where the necessary infrastructure is located to support higher density development. Urban growth should be encouraged in this area. All land uses can be supported within this area. This area is expecting growth over the next **5 – 10 year time-frame**.

Characteristics of the Area

Higher concentrations of all land use development
Natural impediments to development are more limited
Major Infrastructure is available to facilitate high density development
High population densities
High traffic volumes
Excellent fire protection

Development Goals within the High Density Urban Development Area

- Protect natural resources
- Provide for safe and attractive environments - development keeping in character with the existing development.
- Continue to provide and improve parks and recreational resources
- Encourage Higher Density Development that follows a conservation subdivision scenario where homes are clustered and the surrounding environment is preserved.
- Encourage higher density development for all land uses.

Conservation Areas

Riparian buffers and conservation areas are identified by a review of Wilson County's environmental and natural resources. This designation on the future land use map is dark green and primarily includes flood plain, areas that have severe environmental limitations, areas located within a watershed, or in some cases, border waterways where the land is useful as riparian buffers – protecting water quality. A **riparian buffer** is a natural area near a stream with vegetative growth (trees and woodlands) – helping to protect stream and water quality by providing shade, impact from development, water run-off and other factors that may impair a stream and water quality.

Characteristics of the Area

- Significant natural impediments to development including:
- Flood Plain
 - Lakes
 - Streams
 - Wetlands
 - Watersheds and water quality areas

Development Goals within the High Density Urban Development Area

- Encourage protection of land identified in these areas
 - Development in these areas should be carefully reviewed for potential impact on water quality and natural resources
- Encourage greenway connections and trails throughout these areas
- Promote the development of “paddle trails” in these areas for eco-tourism initiatives – drawing outside tax dollars into the community.

ADDITIONAL, GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE LAND USE DECISIONS

Below, general guidelines concerning future land use decisions within Wilson County are listed.

RESIDENTIAL -

1. Locate new units within appropriate areas for building single family, multi-family, modular, & manufactured homes where services are available.
 - Services/Infrastructure (including fire, roads, water and sewer)
 - Secondary road use is increasing – need for turn lanes in some areas
 - Ground water concerns (needs additional study)
 - School capacity to handle new residential growth

- Identify areas of caution (flood prone areas and impaired soils)
- Develop quality places to live (number/Density of homes, size of lots, parking, streets, lights, open space)

COMMERCIAL

1. Located with access to services/utilities/infrastructure/population densities
2. Located to conveniently serve surrounding residential areas verses a typical “strip” style where the commercial is spread out along a major highway instead of being clustered at major intersections.

INDUSTRIAL

1. Located in areas adjacent to existing industrial zoned areas and in other areas where uses are compatible.
2. Future areas may include those areas serviced by rail, highway, and other appropriate infrastructure and services.

RECREATIONAL

1. Locate near existing natural resources where possible
2. Location with access to population and appropriate activities for characteristics of population the activity will serve

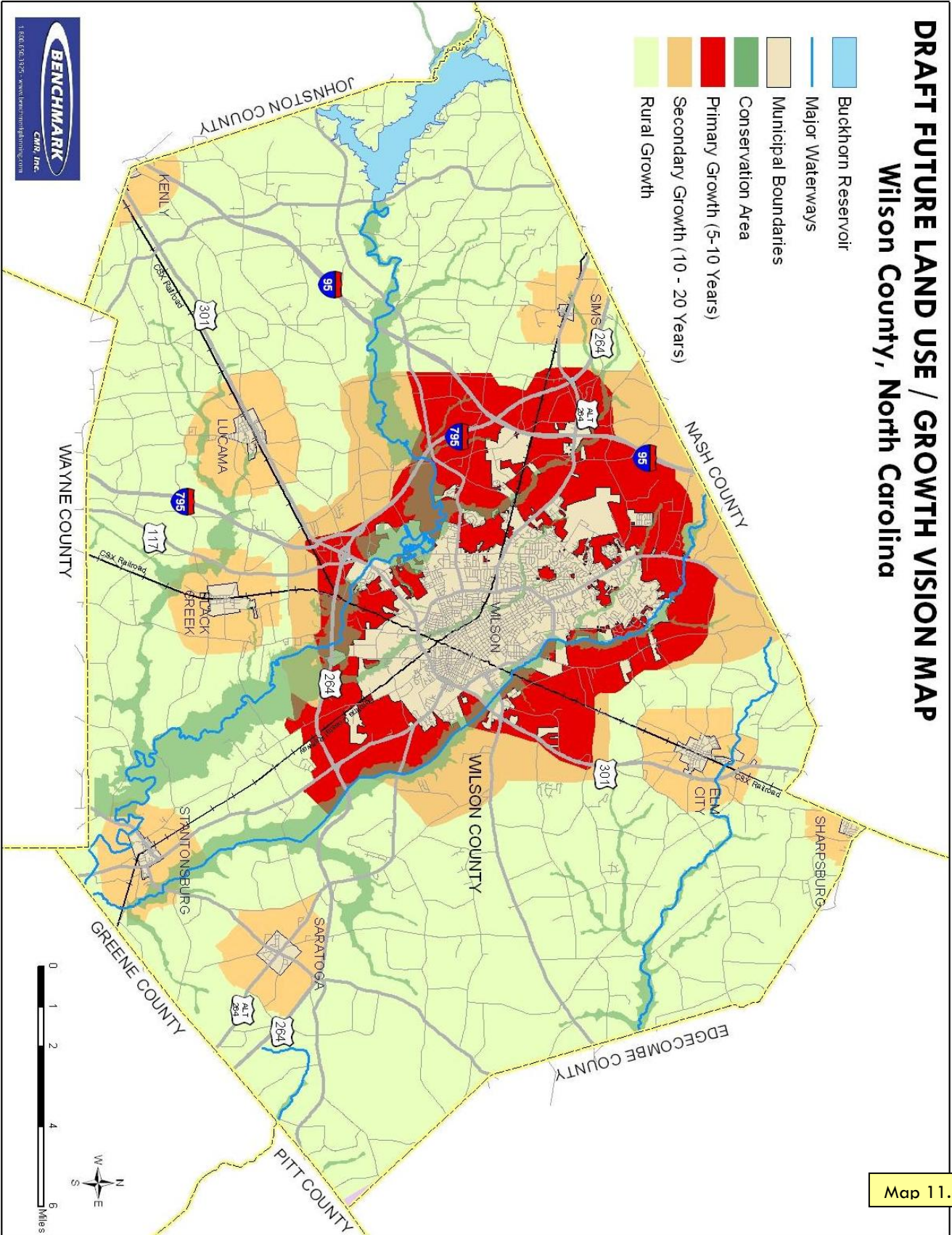
INSTITUTIONAL/GOVERNMENTAL

1. Locate near existing or planned future population densities
2. Locate near infrastructure/services

AGRICULTURAL

1. Maintain Integrity by encouraging compatible future land use to avoid encroachment issues.

DRAFT FUTURE LAND USE / GROWTH VISION MAP Wilson County, North Carolina



Map 11.6

CHAPTER 12 NEXT STEPS / IMPLEMENTATION

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III. Next Steps	3
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12.1. Five-Year Work Plan	2

NEXT STEPS / IMPLEMENTATION

I. INTRODUCTION

The success of any plan is how well it is implemented. It will be necessary to closely follow future development trends and patterns to address any significant changes that may not be captured in this plan.

As next steps, a five-year work plan is suggested. This work plan will help the implementation of the plan “take off” and as suggested below, revisions will be necessary in the future to keep the plan “alive” and relevant. A work plan greater than five years is not suggested, because a thorough review and update is suggested at the five-year mile stone.

II. FIVE-YEAR WORK PLAN

Table 12.1 illustrates the recommended priority actions to implement the 2025 Wilson County Comprehensive Plan.

Table 12.1
Five-Year Work Plan

A five (5) year Work Plan was created to assign priorities to goals and recommendations which were developed to achieve the vision of the plan.

Year(s)	Fiscal Year(s)	Priority Actions
1	2008-2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and adopt a unified development ordinance that incorporates the goals and strategies of this plan • Continue to participate in the Vision 20/20 effort and the City of Wilson Comprehensive Plan Update • Consider identifying existing committees or developing committees within the county to oversee and monitor the progress of the plan goal areas • As part of the unified development ordinance process, conduct a more detailed review of the northwestern side of the county where growth pressures are significantly greater than other areas of the county • Establish a plan for agri-tourism and agri-business development
2 and 3	2009-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner closely with the County’s municipalities in the pursuit of a joint hazard mitigation planning effort • Pursue a joint recreational plan and study with the County’s municipalities to include a regional greenway component and tourism related activities such as camping, canoeing, etc. • Consider detailed small area plans for all Planning Areas of the County identified in the Comprehensive Plan • Consider developing a capital improvement plan to guide county capital investments
4	2011-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish the County Historic Preservation Commission and Local Preservation Program
5	2012-2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the Comprehensive Plan

III. NEXT STEPS

As the work plan begins after the adoption of this plan, it should be the charge of the Planning Board and Staff to review the progress and accomplishments of the plan implementation. At an annual or semi-annual review, a brief meeting should be conducted to determine which goals are being accomplished, goals that need serious attention and identify new trends that may not be covered in the current plan. This review each year will keep the plan implementation active and help instill a sense of ownership within the community of the plan.

As suggested in the work plan, a brief update should be conducted at or near the five-year benchmark. This will allow the opportunity to establish a new five-year work plan to implement any new policies or strategies needed to guide growth and preserve the rural character of Wilson County.

Finally, it is recommended that a complete and thorough review of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan be conducted at the ten-year benchmark. The plan will be half way through its vision period and a detailed assessment will be needed to verify the continued direction for growth and the continued relevance of the vision adopted as part of this plan.

“Without a vision, the people perish.”

Proverbs 29:18